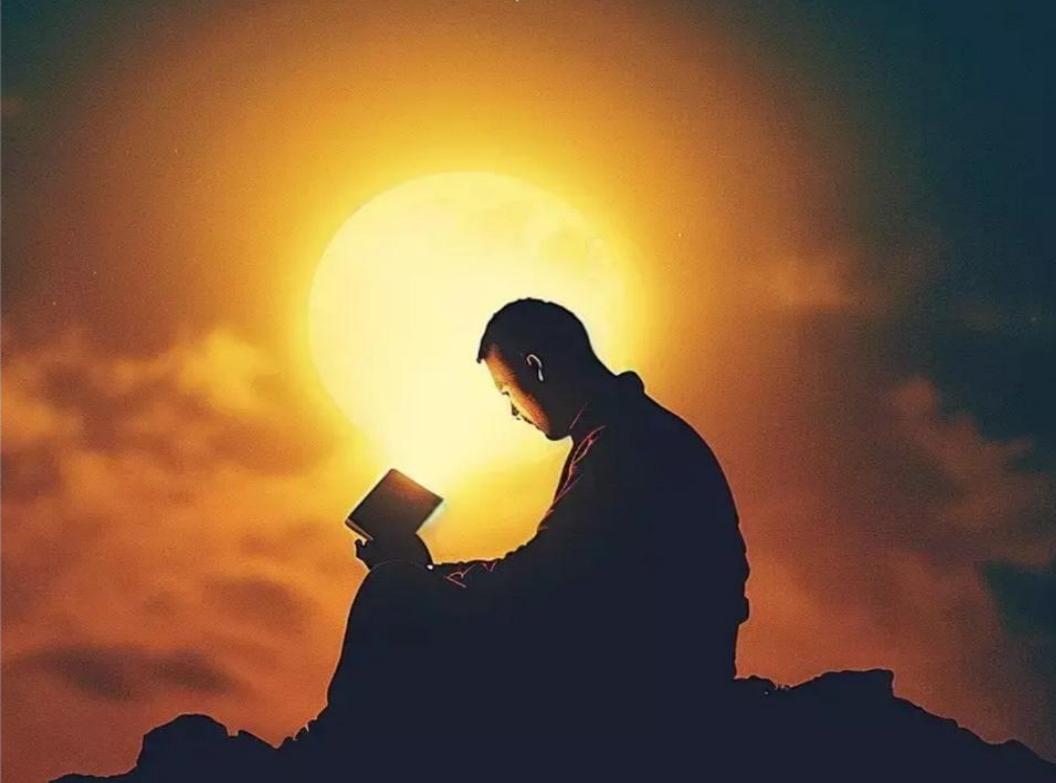


The Ocean of Allah's Mercy



Urooss Khan

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Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

This book is a vessel carrying a singular truth: **Mercy is the heartbeat of Islam**. It is the thread woven into the fabric of creation, the attribute that defines Allah's relationship with us, and the compass guiding our journey back to Him.

I began this work with a dedication to two eternal wellsprings of love: Allah, whose **Rahmah** envelops all existence, and my mother, whose unwavering tenderness taught me mercy in human form. Their presence breathes through these pages, reminding us that divine compassion is both cosmic and intimately personal.

In a world fractured by conflict, injustice, and despair, we have strayed from the essence of our faith. Extremism has distorted Islam's image, and even Muslims have forgotten the Prophetic legacy of radical compassion. This book is an invitation to return to the Quran's luminous verses, the Hadiths of profound gentleness, and the lives of prophets and saints who embodied mercy as a revolutionary force.

DEDICATION

DEDICATED TO ALLAH'S INFINITE LOVE
AND MERCY, AND TO MY MOTHER,
WHOSE UNWAVERING LOVE AND
SUPPORT HAVE BEEN MY GREATEST
BLESSING

INTRODUCTION

In this world of dissension and controversies, there emerges through mercy the sun of hope and unification. In this book, we shall explore the in-depth concept of mercy in the Islamic religion, a notion that constitutes one of the basic pillars in the forming of the relationship between the believer and the Divine, between humans, and between humans and life. In light of the Islamic teachings, let's perceive that mercy is not only the attribute of Allah; it is deeply embedded in the texture of the universe and human life.

The subtitle, "In the Shade of Allah's Mercy," refers to that which envelops one with the sense of protection and nurture, offering solace and guidance. In other words, life under the canopy of divine mercy entails the protection of humanity from life's harshness so that humans could grow in ways spiritual and moral. This book is intended to uncover the threads of mercy woven within the fabric of Islamic practice and belief: how, from the small acts of daily ritual to the largest ethical frames, mercy is woven within.

It draws on the Quran, the Hadith, and the insights of Islamic scholars to explicate the many-faceted aspects of mercy, that it may be manifested through acts of compassion, forgiveness, and social justice, and that it may be opposed to humanity's tendencies to anger,

vengeance, and cruelty. Through that exploration, the readers will have a deeper understanding of how embodying mercy can transform personal lives and communities into fostering a more compassionate and just world. It is the purpose also of this book to debunk misconception and to avail itself of universality, because mercy as a principle is beyond religious boundaries and always brings insights that are relevant to people of all faiths and people of good faith and of good intent.

Learning to understand and take this as the heart of faith, we can appreciate its potency for the other to heal and its enormous potential to shore up ramparts on which humankind can create a more harmonious existence for all.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Divine Mercy

Understanding Mercy in Islam

For Islam, mercy is not an abstract ideal but a principle intrinsic to the very fact of its existence. It serves as one of the guiding lights that mold the ethical and spiritual framework through and within which the life of a Muslim moves. Now, the roots, expressions, and implications of mercy within the fabric that is Islam can be fully appreciated.

The mercy, "**Rahmah**," in Arabic is derived from "Rahm," which means womb. It is deeply metaphorical in etymology, for it suggests to the reader a description of mercy that includes nourishment and enclosure. Much as the womb protects, feeds, and warms a developing child, so does mercy in Islam portray an all-encompassing, protective, and nurturing force. It is symbolic to a divine quality that is at once generous and expansive, just as Allah is compassionate.

Of the 99 names of Allah, there stand two supreme names that signify and lay the groundwork of His very essence of attributes: "**Ar-Rahman**" and "**Ar-Rahim**." "**Ar-Rahman**" stands for "The Most Merciful," while "**Ar-Rahim**" stands for "The Most Compassionate." They are no ordinary attributes to Allah; they lay

the basis for the relationship He is holding with His creation; they underscore the limitless and profound nature of divine mercy.

The Quran, the holy scripture of the Muslims, begins with the opening words "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." The opening phrase gives the tone of the entire Quranic revelation and reiterates the central place that mercy occupies in the Islamic perspective. Each surah, except for one in the Quran, starts off with this introductory and reminder invocation to impress upon the readers the all-pervasive effect of the concept of mercy within the holy text.

The very Book of Allah is a mercy upon mankind. It guides humans through its wisdom, advising, and problem-solving in life. The message given in the Quran is that the mercy of Allah is endless. His mercy involves everything existing upon the earth. His mercy is not only meant for Muslims but includes all creations of Allah such as animals, plants, and the environment as well.

Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger of Allah, according to the devotion of over 1.5 billion Muslims in the world. After him, he is called "**Rahmatan lil- 'Alamin**" in the Holy Quran—mercy upon all the worlds. In his life, one finds a distinct example of actual mercy from Allah. His benevolent behavior and dealing with people, whether friends, family members, or even enemies, are truly the finest examples of patience, forbearance, and compassion.

One such example of the Prophet's mercy is evident from his treatment of the people of Mecca after its conquest. Instead of using the occasion to exact retribution, however, he forgave his former enemies and granted them unconditional pardons. This goes a long way to prove issues on mercy, bridging gaps, and reconciliation.

Practically, his teachings and actions suggest as to how mercy could be exercised in leading one's daily life. His treatment towards others, his emphasis on mercy and efforts directed towards uplift of down-trodden and oppressed reflect the cardinal principles of mercy so central to Islam.

In Islam, the aspect of mercy is expanded to apply to all aspects of interpersonal relations, not only toward humans but also toward animals, the environment, and creation at large. The religion is maintained within the Quran and the Hadiths through many directives to maintain the state of nature. There are many examples of how the Prophet, being abundantly merciful, deals with animals and is concerned about the environment.

As the Prophet Muhammad himself stressed with others and his followers, they need to be ever so kind with the animals. As such, particular Hadiths are available about the case where he included as far as the intervention through which the suffering of animals was alleviated and the attitude of their owners and handlers rectified. These examples highlight that

mercy in the Islamic faith can be so broad that it reaches out to other life forms and not merely a relationship between people

The concept of mercy is deemed to be a propelling principle in the concept of social justice espoused in Islam. Zakat and Sadaqah are elements inherent in Islamic welfare. They are made to bridge the gulf between the well-off and the poor, so that wealth will be rightly circulated and the segment with no dowries will rightly be prospected.

Zakat and Sadaqah are the other cardinal alms that underline the mercifulness and compassion of the Muslim. They foster the belief that all the wealth is, in the end belonging to Allah, and this fact be used in accomplishing His goal in relieving the misery of others. The emphasis on social justice inherent under Islam is a clear reflection of the gigantic necessity of building up a sympathetic and just society.

The main essence of the Shari'a or Islamic law is to protect discipline and justice in society. It, however, also aims for its application with leniency and mercy. Ease, or the concept of "Taysir", constitutes a major jurisprudence of the Shari'a. It allows some ease and accommodation in the application of the laws so that justice may be meted without causing undue hardship.

Taysir captures the essence of the fact that the inflexible observation of laws should not precipitate a situation of either manifest or hidden injustice and misery on the one hand,

and on the other, the execution of the law should be moderated by being liberal enough to find room for compassion and consideration in varying individual cases. The dynamic nature of mercy within Islam is based upon the understanding that this attribute should inform not only personal behavior but also the constructs within which the law and society themselves function.

In Islam, mercy is not something passive, abstract, or just a very good virtue but an active and dynamic force modeling ethical behavior, informing principles of law, and guiding social responsibility. It is seen to be that which propels justice, graciousness, and compassion and, as such, influences every walk of a Muslim's life.

The Quran and Hadiths emphasize that mercy is supposed to influence how one determines and regards the living beings, conduct at individual levels, and societal values. It is because of this nature of mercy that it's able to accommodate the problems and complications in life in the present modern changes satisfactorily.

It is mercy that makes the heart of Islam beat, which acts as the guiding light for the faithful, setting the parameters of morality, guiding through law and social principles, developing compassion, and a sense of responsibility. The concept of mercy in Islam brings forth a powerful, life-changing approach toward the modeling of a world filled with justice and harmonious living in a society often marred with injustice and suffering.

Through the understanding and practice of mercy, Muslims will become instrumental in contributing panacea needs towards the human situation to breed a more humane and just society vis-à-vis fellow creation. Mercy, as revealed in the Holy Quran and manifested in the character and life of the Prophet Muhammad, is one of the most central and durable aspects of Islamic faith and practice.

The concept of mercy within Islam humbles one to a level of personal behavior with social justice, alongside bigger themes such as stewardship of the environment, interfaith dialogues, and global solidarity. Humankind in Islam is pushed toward a way of the world with the essence of compassion and understanding, which its strong emphasis on mercy encourages believers to do continuously.

It is taught by Islam that humans are to take care of the Earth, printing a concept of 'stewardship', which is extended to caring for and maintaining the environment. Stewardship can go a step further in reducing waste, conserving natural resources, and caring for the planet. There have been statements by the Prophet Muhammad in his teachings that regard the care for the Earth and the environment.

In addition, relations with people of other faiths in Islam means that mercy encourages respectful dialogues with them and cooperation. With the Qur'anic attitude for peaceful coexistence with mutual understanding,

therefore, mercy will rule the person's interactions with others, be they believers or otherwise.

Through the works of mercy, a Muslim works in solidarity for and with the needy beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries. Humanitarian assistance, advocacy for human rights, and development support on the global scope are all embodiments of the works of mercy.

The notion of mercy in Islam extends beyond the limits of mere words to form a deep and multidimensional concept, flowing through the very fiber of the belief. Etymologically in the roots of the word "**Rahmah**" and through its manifestations in the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and Islamic law, mercy serves as a guiding factor by which ethical behavior is shaped, social principles are informed, and compassion and justice toward the other are evoked.

An exploration into the depth of mercy in Islam can help one appreciate more of how important this mercy is on personal behavior, issues of value, and international interaction. In Islam, mercy is not an attribute of Allah; in contrast, it is the central dimension of confessing, coming with a new vision of transformation towards a more compassionate and just world.

Chapter 2

Disclosing the Stages of the Quran

The basic essence of the Islamic teaching is to show mercy toward every human being, animal, bird, and fellow human beings. The King of the universe Allah has shown His mercy in 99 different names and in the verses of the Holy Quran. Allah is the most compassionate and merciful Rab. Reading the Holy Quran, I came to know that in every Ayah Allah mentions His name, **Ar-Rahman** the Most Compassionate Rab. The Holy Quran is divided into three main areas:

The Emphasis on Tauheed and Strengthening Imaan

The early parts of the Quran begin to lay the foundation of faith, Imaan, and introduce the concept of Tauheed, the oneness of Allah. Surah Al-Fatiha, "The Opening," sets the pace for the rest of the Quran by beginning with "**In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful**" (**Quran 1:1**). That surah alone begins to set the stage for just how much the mercy of Allah guides those who believe.

Allah stresses this again in **Surah Al-Baqarah**: "**Your Allah is one Allah; there is no deity except Him, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful**" (**Quran 2:163**).

These early Surahs are full of stories about

Prophets like Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Musa, Hazrat Nuh, in which incidents Allah's mercy is quite evident with His guiding and helping them at each difficult moment. For example, Allah, the Most High, **in Surah Al-Anbiya, rescues Ibrahim, AS, from the blaze: "We said, 'O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham"** (Quran 21:69).

Moreover, Allah shares his mercy in Surah Al-Imran when he sends down the guidance: **"Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers"** (Quran 3:154). All these chapters put together build up the faith of the believer to show that Allah's mercy occupies the core in every Muslim's spiritual journey.

Quranic reference :

our God is one God. There is no deity except Him, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:163)**

Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humble at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth, and that they not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long time passed over them, and so their hearts hardened? And many of them are defiantly disobedient.

Surah Al-Hadid (57:16)

Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-

Living, the Sustainer of existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.

Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Greatest.

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:255)

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East or the West, but righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Prophets, and gives his money, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; those who fulfill their promise when they promise; and those who are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177)

The first chapters of the Holy Quran deal with lessons on Tauheed, strengthening Imaan, and building up the edifice of the Islamic creed. It is in these chapters that Allah introduces Him as most merciful Rab for all mankind, who helped Hazrat Ibrahim and other Prophets in their bad times revealing them his mercy.

The Lessons of Morality and Ethics

The subsequent chapters, other than the first few, teach morality lessons. These chapters emphasize from Allah how to strengthen morality and ethics. Rights of wives, parents, neighbors, partners, and other fellow beings have been quoted that help in the upliftment of morality. The moral stories of the Prophets and the ways of their ethical practice are followed in these Ayahs. They illustrate the mercy of the Prophets in the form of their friendly behavior towards their enemies and nonbelievers.

Surah **Al-Ma'idah** elaborates on the fulfillment of contracts and obligations: "**O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts**" (**Quran 5:1**). His mercy in this Surah is manifested by the fact that detailed guidelines were given so that justice and harmony could be fulfilled in society. It is where the moral stories of the Prophets have been highlighted—for instance, the story of Yusuf AS in Surah Yusuf. "The patience and forgiveness of Yusuf towards those who wronged him is but an embodiment of Allah's mercy: He said, '**No blame will be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful**'" (**Quran 12:92**).

More focus is given to morality in the **Surah An-Nahl**, a focus directly related to divine mercy. "Indeed, Allah is with those who fear Him and

those who are doers of good" (**Quran 16:128**). This all are teachings that direct morality in the lives of believers by showing them that they are lights arising out of the mercy of the divine and should in turn show the light of being merciful and compassionate among others.

Quranic reference:

"And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created.

Surah Al-Isra (17:70)

For that reason We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul [i.e., as punishment for murder] or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And Our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, even after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.

Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:32)

And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make peace between them. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the command of Allah. And if it returns, then make

reconciliation between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.
Hujurat (49:9)

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse to give it, then indeed Allah is Acquainted with what you do."

Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:8)

O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might] knowingly devour a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].

Surah Al-Nisa (4:29)

And [He] who has forbidden the immoralities, whether apparent of them or concealed, and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allah that which you do not know.

Surah Al-An'am (6:152)

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp in glass, the glass as if it were a shining star lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,

whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon Light. Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.

Surah An-Nur (24:35)

The Outcome of Actions: Punishment and Reward

The last parts of the Quran address the results of human actions. It clearly states the punishments for sins, as well as the reward for good deeds. Surah Al-Mulk tells humans of the risks involved in their acts of disobedience: "**Do you feel secure that He who is in the heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you and suddenly it would sway?** " (Quran 67:16).

This Surah, like other, was more explicit about realities in terms of the next world when sinners will receive divine justice. But the call to repentance was not belied even in such stern warnings by the mercy of Allah: "**Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins.'** **Indeed, He is the One who is the Granter of Forgiveness, the Merciful'**".

The Ayah encapsulates the following: the mercy of Allah; there is always the opportunity of

repentance; and His Mercy outweighs His Wrath. Surah Al-Ikhlas also emphasizes Allah's mercy, even in its short but amazing declaration of monotheism. **"Say, 'He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge'" (Quran 112:1-2)**. The Holy Quran reassures that Allah is merciful. He is ever-merciful and turns toward the penitents so that they may turn towards Him for forgiveness and guide

Quranic reference:

"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by what the people have earned, so that He may let them taste part of what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."

Surah Ar-Rum (30:41)

"Whoever does a good deed - it is for his own soul; and whoever does evil - it is against it. And your Lord is not ever unjust to the servants."

Surah Ar-Rum (30:44)

"Indeed, Hell has been lying in wait for the transgressors, a place of return. In which they will remain for ages They will not taste therein any coolness or drink Except scalding water and foul purulence. An appropriate recompense. Indeed, they were not expecting a reckoning And they denied Our signs with denial. And all

things We have enumerated in a record. So taste [the result of your deeds]. We will not increase you except in torment."

Surah An-Naba' (78:21-30)

His continued mercy upon humankind and His many blessings have been brought into remembrance over and over again—"So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?"—in Surah Ar-Rahman. A view of the reward is finally given to the people who perform righteousness and mercy by Allah in Surah Al-Fajr: "[To the righteous it will be said], 'O reassured soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]" (Quran 89:27-28). The reward promised herein emphasizes the ultimate objective of bringing oneself in line with Allah's mercy and compassion.

Similarly, Allah describes the dual extreme and the picture of Hell. However, when describing punishments, Allah continuously mentions **Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem**. If one reflects over the Ayahs, he shall find that though the word 'punishments' is mentioned, Allah still stresses that He is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. So He invites them to turn back to Him, stressing that Allah loves His creation more than anything. The doors of repentance are open until the last breath, so one should turn toward Allah, because Allah does not wish to send anyone to Hellfire. The love that Allah has for His creation is more than that even of

seventy mothers. It is mere rhetoric suggesting that His love is greater than the drops of all oceans, more than the weight of all the air, and more than the age of the universe.

Chapter 3

Exploring Allah's 99 Attributes

All the names of Allah are full of compassion and mercy. In each name, we see hidden mercy for His creation. Several different ayahs mention those names that manifest mercy on the part of Allah; that is, He is always here to forgive and never aspires to send anyone to hellfire. On the contrary, He has arranged a beautiful heaven for us all in which to spend an eternal life with all its joy and happiness.

Similarly, the 99 names of Allah that we read, the initial names like **Ar-Rahman**, **Ar-Rahim**, **Al-Malik**, **Al-Quddus**, **As-Salam**, **Al-Mu'min**, **Al-Muhaymin**, **Al-Aziz**, **Al-Jabbar**, and so on, describe the characteristics of our kind Lord.

While reading through these wonderful names, I came to know their specialty. From **Ar-Rahman** to **Ar-Rahim**, down to **As-Sabur**, the Patient One who does not hasten to punish the wrongful, it was then that I realized Allah is to be loved and not feared. And that brought me to say, "Allah is for love and not for fear." Then comes the thought that we should do good deeds due to love rather than fear. They say that love is an energizing power; a lover voluntarily surrenders to the loved, whereas fear compels a human being to submit.

Unfortunately, most extremist scholars tend to emphasize Allah's wrath and anger, which usually leaves very bad effects on one's faith. This approach may make people drift away from Islam and Allah.

Here are the 99 names of Allah:

Ar-Rahman : The Entirely Merciful

The One whose mercy, in totality, is extended to all living creatures.

Ar-Rahim: The Especially Merciful This is the One whose mercy is for the Believers.

Al-Malik : The King

Who gives peace and security to His creatures.

Al-Mu'min : The All-Giver of Security He who sponsors safety

Al-Muhaymin: The All-Protector

He who administers and protects everything.

Al-Aziz : The Mighty

He who is mighty and honorable.

Al-Jabbar : The Compeller

He who mends and restores, by His will and he who compels by His will.

Al-Mutakabbir : The Supremely Great

This is the One who transcends the very essence of all characteristics of creation.

Al-Khaliq : The Creator

The One who brings into existence from absolute nothingness.

Al-Bari : The

The Oft-pardoning sin and the Oft-cover of faults

Al-Qahhar : the Dominant

The One who has free will on everything.

Al-Wahhab : the Bestower

The One who bestows gifts favorably beyond the merit and expectations of His servants.

Ar-Razzaq: Opener of the doors of success, mercy, and sustenance.

Al-Alim :The All-Knowing

The One who knows everything with His ultimate knowledge.

Al-Qabid: The Withholder

The One who withhold sustenance to whom He will or puts constrained and constricted sufficiency.

Ar-Rafi' : The Exalter

He is the One who raises the standard and enhances the status of the obedient.

Al-Mu'izz: The Honourer

The One giving honor and dignity to whoever He

wills.

Al-Mudhill : The Dishonourer

The One humiliates and dishonors whom he deserves .

Al-Basir: The All-Seeing

The One Whose sight extends to all things, open and secret.

Al-Hakam : The Judge

The One who judgement is passed; He who arbitrates all matters.

Al-Adl : The Just

He who is just

Al-Khabir : The All- Knowing

He who knows everything; nothing is hidden from Him.

Al-Halim: The Most-Forbearing

The One who when feelings of anger ignite is quiet and deliberate and does not rush to punish.

Al-Azim : The Magnificent

The One who is great and whose greatness our minds cannot imagine.

Al-Gafoor: One who pardons repeatedly and

magnificently.

Ash-Shakur : The Most Appreciative

The appreciative one who tends to be grateful and gives justly in return even for a small deed.

Al-Ali : The Most High, who has the highest status amongst all creatures.

Al-Kabir ; The Most Great

His greatness has no similitude. He who maintains everything.

Al-Muqit; The Sustainer

The provider of all those things that are beneficial for sustaining life.

Al-Hasib : The Reckoner

The one who gives the satisfaction.

Al-Jalil : The Majestic

The one who is very precious.

Al-Karim : The Bountiful

is the most generous, Who bestows His favor upon His creation without charge.

Ar-Raqib :The Watchful

He who observes everything and the matter of every soul is under His supervision.

Al-Mujib : The Responsive

He is the One who answers prayer, requests, etc. from His servants.

Al-Wasi' The All-Encompassing

Nothing escapes Allah's knowledge and mercy.

Al-Hakim : The Wise

The one in whose acts perfect wisdom is acknowledged, as performed with fine and deep knowledge and justice.

Al-Wadud :The Loving

The one who loves His creation only and, for that matter, shows them mercy and compassion.

Al-Majid : The Glorious

The one who is Alone who will raise the dead on the Day of Judgment.

Ash-Shahid : The Witness

He who is always present and witness of everything.

Al-Haqq : The Truth

He whose existence is real and necessary.

Al-Wakil : The Trustee

He who takes care of all the matters and in Whom everyone trusts.

Al-Qawiyy: He who is strengthful and mighty, and in whose strength, and in whose power no impotence befalls.

Al-Matin: The Firm

The Firm, the steadfast, whose Might is great.

Al-Waliyy : The Patron

He who has the power to take in his charge, and takes care of his friends and supporters.

Hamid : The Praised One

He Who knows and gives an account of everything, not even a single atom eludes Him.

Al-Mubdi' : The Originator

The One takes the initiative for the first time.

Al-Mu'id :The Restorer

He Who gives life anew. He will create as often as death occurs.

Al-Muhyi :The Giver of Life

He Who gives life to everyone that is alive and also, who sustains

He Who gives life, grants a livelihood and provisions for sustenance to the living things, and appointment to someone to die and makes him die.

Al-Hayy - The Ever-Living

The One who has life since the days of eternity without the aspect of beginning or ending.

Al-Qayyum - The Self-Subsisting

The One who can sustain things on their own and independent from others.

Al-Wajid - The Perceiver, The One who finds and who owns everything according to his will and wish.

Al-Majid - The Noble

He who is most high and noble in rank and most honorable in the so.

Al-Wahid: The One

The One Who has no partner in His Self and in His Attributes.

Al-Ahad :The Single

He Who is single, indivisible, incomparable.

As-Samad ;The Eternal Refuge

He Who is eternal, affected not by any, and on Whom all creation depends.

Al-Muqtadir ; The Creator of All Power

He who has in the fullest measure, the power to do what He pleases, and has in his control the entire domination of the world being able to dispose of the whole, according to His Will and Plan in complete wisdom; and can manage anything at all.

Al-Muqaddim : The Expediter

He Who puts things in the first place, advances them, according to His Will.

Al-Awwal : The First with no before.

Al-Aakhir: The Last

The Last with no after.

Az-Zahir : The Manifest

The Manifest; the one whose being is patent to the outward but whose attributes are beyond man's comprehension.

Al-Batin:

Hidden The Hidden;

It means: the controller of all the affairs and the lord of all things.

Al-Muta'ali: The Self-Exalted

It means: high above all in His attributes and essence.

Al-Barr: Originator of the Good

He is the Beneficent and the Generous, from whom all benefits emanate.

At- Tawwab: The Ever-Returning: He constantly turns with compassion to the repenting servants who turn to Him in penance.

Al-Muntaqim : The Avenger

He is the One Who punishes the wrongdoers and takes retribution against the unjust.

Al-Afuww : The Pardoner

He is the One who pardons the people for their sins and forgives without grudge.

Ar-Ra'uf : The Kind

The One who owns it all and is King over it. He does all the combines all thing

Dhū'l-Jalāli wa'l-Ikrām : The Lord of Majesty and Generosity

He is full of glory, majestic and bountiful

Al-Muqsit : The Just One

He adjudicates each matter He.

Al-Ghaniyy : The Self-Sufficient

He who is absolutely independent and stands not in need of anything from any of the creatures.

Al-Mughni : The Enricher

The Emancipator', who bestows much, and the one by whom victory is achieved.

Al-Mani': The Withholder

The One who brings about benefit and good to His creation.

An-Nur :The Light

He who illuminates the heavens, the earth, and the hearts of the Believers.

Al-Hadi: The Guide

He who guides His creation to the Right Path.

Al-Badi': The Incomparable Originator

He who creates with no precedence. He is the originator of all things.

Al-Baqi : He from whom all things are made but who will remain forever.

Al-Warith : The Inheritor

He from whom is all created that which remains when the created perishes.

Ar-Rashid:He Who Guidance on the Right Path

He who guides His creation on the right path of wisdom and goodness.

As-Sabur: The Patient One.

The All-Mighty Allah discloses his mercy in his names. I saw ten Allah's names filled with mercy and compassionate:

Allah's hidden benevolence and affection through his creations:

Al-Muhaymin: The Protector

This name reveals the preservative well-being of Allah upon all His creations. When we face any problems or issues, the guardianship of Allah provides that it is all arranged well according to

His scheme and wisely placed with mercy. Much of the time, He saves us from anguish, of which we may not even be cognizant.

Al-Mu'akhir: The Delayer

This refers to that Lord delaying from you some things, like success or alleviation against distress. It may be that Allah's mercy would prevail in such a delay to brace your souls when you are supposed to be prepared in the heart against a shift of course in life, or protect you from harm that would happen later on in life as a result of this issue.

Al-Qahhar :The Subduer

Even if this is a Name representing the Power of Allah to subdue and overcome, there is still hidden in it an aspect of mercy: that is, Allah might subdue our egos or misguided desires through trials and tribulations to bring us closer unto Himself.

Al-Muntaqim : The Avenger

Therefore the justice of Allah is Mercy first and foremost to the oppressed. His vengeance on the unjust and the wrong-doers is a mercy to be meted out on behalf of the wronged.

Al-Latif :The Subtle, The Gentle

Allah's Latif is His kind subtlety that is concealed from mankind. When a person least expects it, He executes matters in a subtle way—arrange them as can be.

Al-Hakeem: The Wise

Allah is the Wise, and what to us may seem troubling or burdening could merely be part of His Wise plan replete with unthought-of benefits and mercies that we would not know of.

Ash-Shafi :The Healer

Although disease and suffering are a test, they are attended by the hidden mercy of spiritual cleansing, patience, and sometimes even returning to Allah; in this,

healing from Allah, quick or slow, is but mercy bringing physical and spiritual health.

In a right and just way, Allah puts back our prayer to Him, but often not in the way we want to give in to our immediate whims. His response, whether it be the object of our prayer or not, ever contains secret acts of mercy that, in themselves, respond to the same prayer by accommodating the real needs .

Al-Mani' : The Withholder

But Allah withholds from us some things, which itself in a form is hidden mercy. We may ask for something which is not in our best interest; hence, His withholding saves us from harm.

Al-Barr: The Origin of All Good

Allah's goodness covers that which is apparent and that which is hidden; hence, in distress is a goodness and mercy that can only be realized at a later time, when the wisdom of Allah with regard to our life starts to unfold.

Ar-Rahman: The Most Merciful

This name describes Allah's intrinsic infinite, and all-encompassing Mercy. It describes Allah the all-compassionate that rains mercy on each creation, even the Kuffar and the sinners because of his Rahimah.

While it has much the same meaning as Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim describes more the nature of Allah's mercy to the believers. It is a concerned, limited-scale, replenishing, and nourishing mercy to those who respond to His guidance.

Al-Ghaffar: The All-Forgiving

This name emphasizes the fact that Allah is not only capable of forgiving but is also willing to do so for the same sins of a person repeatedly. It is a subtle form of mercy in his ability to overlook and forgive the wrongs of his creations.

Al-Ghafur lays so much emphases on Allah's all-inclusive rahmah. The secretly merciful character of his would result in forgiveness of sin, whether done in continuity, which is very great deed of patience and good.

The names of Allah denoting anger and wrath are closed in between those names that symbolize kindness and mercy. To be specific, the names beginning from **Al- Muzil, Al-Qahhar, and Al-Muntaqim** are flanked by names of mercy. This placing itself explains Allah is not eager to punish his true believers, and He loves them much. If somebody spreads ruin and bloodshed in the society, then only Allah's anger

falls on the persons who sin against His commands. Yet, Allah has placed beside these names of retribution His names of mercy, to show that the doors of repentance are always open. May Allah guide us in doing good deeds to please this loving God who cares about us more than anything and fulfill all our needs and wants.

These attributes call us toward establishing a relationship with Allah that is based on love and devotion, rather than fear. They want us to radiate these divine qualities in our interactions with others so that mercy, compassion, and kindness may also become the hallmark of our lives with others. The more we understand these attributes and live by them in our lives, the closer we will grow toward the divine essence and develop a relationship based on genuine love and appreciation.

Chapter 4

The Heart of Divine Justice

At the core of the Quran is God's blueprint for living, a vision of the world where justice, kindness, and mercy are the very fabric for human existence. Deep within the teachings of Allah SWT lies the tapestry hewed with threads of compassion and equity in order to offer light to those who emulate the attributes of the Almighty in their day-to-day lives. In the process of understanding their essence, we find ourselves at the juncture of moral imperatives and spiritual enlightenment. The Holy Quran and Hadith light the pathway where justice is not only a principle; it is a profound duty cutting through all personal biases and social boundaries. So also is kindness, not a fleeting feeling but a continual practice reflecting an image of Allah's boundless mercy—His limitless love and compassion.

Rhetorical question flows from Surah Ar-Rahman, flows into history with timeless relevance: "Is there any reward for good other than good?" It basically questions the very foundation of God's justice, that the reciprocity of goodness involves acting with kindness and receiving in its exact measure of reward. It simply reminds us that the essence of ehsaan is a principle in giving without wanting anything in return; it simply is the very heart of Allah's Mercy.

Let us get into the holy texts of Islam, in which we discuss God's call to justice as expounded on the verses of the Holy Book, the Quran, and the traditions of His Beloved Prophet, Muhammad PBUH. It will teach us the deep meanings of being just and kind toward fellow human beings and the animal kingdom. Every teaching gives a glimpse into the divine attributes of Allah—the Merciful and the Just—inviting us to think deeply about how those characteristics need to frame our actions and interactions.

In Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah (SWT) asks a very thought-provoking question:

"Is there any reward for good other than good?" (Surah Ar-Rahman, 55:60)

The verse, therefore, sums up divine justice and the principle that any good turns into good. He, of His gracious mercies, shall see to it that every deed of mercy and compassion shall find its reward of the like kind. Allah is most merciful, and He gains nothing from the goodness of the creation; so, therefore, the reward for such noble deeds will be of equal merit.

Ehsaan is considered as that aspect of God's character where He is the perfect source of mercy. It is suggested that the core concept of true compassion is not to prove a point or expect something in return but to practice kindness for the sheer purpose of practicing kindness in the

world. This quality is that which reflects the Merciful—a human being like God who strives day in and day out to exercise compassion and justice without expecting a return.

The Quran further elaborates on the importance of justice through several verses:

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed, Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted."

(Surah An-Nisa, 4:135)

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and let not the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do."

(Surah Al-Ma'idah: 8)

"Verily, we sent our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance of Right from Wrong that people may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron, in

which is material for mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help, unseen, Him and His messengers: For Allah is full of strength, exalted in might."

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.

This highlights the fact that justice is among the major principles in Islam that ought to always come ahead of personal attitude and that of societal norms. Allah desires for the believers to act just in all manners, invariably, to all without considering any personal circumstances or relation. This divine directive is not kept within the Muslim community but reaches out to the whole of humanity and even beasts, thus showing its comprehensiveness.

The likes of punishments and mercy are expounded clearly in the celestial teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

"A woman was punished in Hell because of a cat which she had confined until it died. She did not give it to eat or drink when it was confined, nor did she free it so that it might eat the insects of the earth".

Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3482

It depicts how cruelty to animals is an act almost close to sin and how compassion can almost be extended toward the expression of the inability to express pain.

The Prophet said: "A man was traveling in a journey, became very thirsty, and found a well. He went down into it and drank water and came out and saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. The man said: 'This (dog) is suffering from the thirst like I was.' So he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and watered it. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him." **Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 2466**

This hadith communicates the fact that any form of kindness, the mere act that is directed to any living thing, receives its reward from Allah. Hence, it alerts the power of seeing things in other people's perspective in every interaction.

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The just will be seated upon pulpits of light near Allah, those who are fair with regards to their judgment and their family and those who are under them."

Sahih Muslim; Hadith 1827

The following hadith shows the status quo that the just people enjoy, hence serving and upholding fairness in all matters.

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "**Beware of injustice, for injustice will be darkness on the Day of Resurrection. And beware of stinginess, for stinginess destroyed those who were before you. It incited them to shed blood and make lawful what was unlawful.**"

-Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2578

It is a warning of severe torment and moral decline that occurs when injustice is prevalent.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,
"There are seven whom Allah will shade with His Shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His. They are. a just ruler."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 660)

The following Hadith is an affirmation of the divine reward for those ruling justly and an explanation that fairness holds a critical role in leadership and governance:

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "**O Abu Dharr! You are weak, and it is a trust, and on the Day of Resurrection it will be a cause of disgrace and**

regret except for one who takes it and fulfills all obligations and does so perfectly."

(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1825)

This saying points out that a leader is responsible and accountable; one has to do one's duty with justice and integrity.

The Messenger of Allah said, "**He who deceives is not of us.**" **(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 102)**

This Hadith defames dishonesty, particularly with respect to trade and business, and again re-echoes the point that one has to deal justly and be fair with anything.

The Quran and the Hadith present before us a great vision of a life to be lived in a regime governed by justice and mercy, the very attributes of Allah (SWT). That "**Is there any reward for good other than good?**" from Surah Ar-Rahman presents it in such style, including in itself the principle of repayment in kind and the expectation of Allah, that our deeds mirror, nay, reflect the unlimited mercy that the Creator showered upon us all.

The teachings of Allah and the example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrate that justice is not just a principle; it is a way to live out the Divine in human fairness and compassion. Each act of kindness, each step toward justice, takes us closer to living out our spiritual and moral duties.

Seen in the light of the divine, taking up these qualities in our everyday lives is a matter not only of serving Allah's commands but also contributing to a more just and merciful world. Let us take on these injunctions with real feelings and actions that give expression to these divine qualities of mercy and justice in inter-relationship with others.

May every action in our future lives, as we move further, prove to be an example of the molds of divine justice and compassion, where through our lives and the lives of those people around us we can reflect back on the infinite mercy of Allah.

Chapter Five

Allah's Call for Compassion in Focusing on His Creation

While displaying divine attributes of His Justice, Kindness, and Mercy, one story really comes as a deep example of Allah's limitless mercy. I'd like to draw attention to the story of the blind old man whose humble presence was simply overlooked by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in the midst of his busy life. It was then that Allah, out of His infinite mercy, sent Jibrael to remind the Prophet about giving importance to and showing care for each and every individual, especially the helpless.

Now, this act dramatically reflects Allah's constant attention towards the weak and helpless amongst all of us. Indeed, it confirms that none are too small to receive His care, that His mercies reach each and every creature of His, no matter what earthly condition they are in. Through this story, we are shown not only the gentle reprimand of the Prophet but also the two important reminders: Allah does not forget His weak creatures; on the contrary, He takes great care to remember these creatures and to see that they are treasured.

As we go through this chapter, reflect on how within this story lies the justice, kindness, and mercy of Allah. Thus it serves to remind us for

the sake of those who are usually ignored and forgotten to be a better people, showing compassion and care to them and to remember that everyone has an important place in the Almighty's eyes.

One day, the Prophet Muhammad was having a discussion with the leaders of Quraysh and was trying to communicate the message of Islam to them. At that very moment, a blind man, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, came to the Prophet and interrupted him in conversation, asking to be taught something from what Allah had revealed. The Prophet was eager to win over the most influential Quraysh leaders, so he frowned and turned away from Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum. He was annoyed by the interruption as the matter being discussed between him and the chiefs of Quraysh was vital.

On this incident, Allah sent down the following opening verses for Surah Abasa:

"He frowned and turned away when the blind man came to him. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified, or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified.". "But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge] while he fears [Allah], from him you are distracted."

(Quran 80:1-10)

This verse signifies that the type of man that goes to him searching for guidance out of fear from Allah, like Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, is supposed to be cared for and attended to. He might be weaker in worldly influence.

I reflect on this story, so full of the revelation of Quran, wherein the blind man received indifference from our beloved Prophet Muhammad due to his discussion with the Quraysh leaders, and I still feel the immense love which our beloved Allah has for us. Finally, the most merciful Lord, Allah, made him realize that the weak and the less influential among the strong Quraysh leaders were also worth his attention. Every soul learns from this incident that Allah has care for each one of us, making every individual significant in the eyes of the Prophet and bringing lessons for mankind as a whole. Allah's mercy is not confined to any set of people at all, and even amidst a crowd, Allah does not turn a blind eye toward His created beings. Indeed, Allah is nearer to us than our breath. He listens to everything and takes care of us.

We are often oblivious to the people around us and unable to focus on their needs and wants. We even show reluctance to understand what they feel. At times, there are more than eight billion people in the world who have their grievances, desires, and needs. While we might

not be able to care for the needs of our relatives or family members, Allah does; He is always watching and fulfilling them. O Allah, I am ready to sacrifice my life for You. Your love makes me cry all the time and is making me a complete person in this world. Allah is always there where no one else can reach or understand. The love of Allah for His creation makes mankind the luckiest of all creations in the universe. Almighty Allah does not only love those of His obedient servants but also loves those who commit wrong deeds. God is ever-calling us for our repentance. Allah says that if a believer comes towards Him with one step, He will come to him with two steps.

How much beloved our God is, always cherishing and giving support to us.

This hadith represents one of the famous sayings of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), indicating the mercy of Allah and His eagerness to forgive and guide His servants. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

"Allah says: 'If My servant comes close to Me a handspan, I come close to him an arm's length; if he comes close to Me an arm's length, I come close to him the span of outstretched arms; and if he comes to Me walking, I come to him running.'"

This Hadith shows that Allah is ever-prepared to

accept and guide any person who comes to Allah, even if the amount of effort in the beginning was minute.

Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

"And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me—indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the suppliant when he calls upon Me."

— Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:186

This Ayah opened my eyes, and I started falling in love with our beloved God. It shows how much He cares about us and is ever ready to respond. If I consider examples of temporary materialistic relationships, it will show that no one in this social media era is ready to listen to the grievance of their fellow human beings.

Nor is any person always present for another person. In this connection, the most merciful of all Lords is aware of His creation, "**Say, O Messenger, I am always near to them, and I hear whenever they make a call.**" Truly, Allah is our best friend and the closest associate to whom we can always run for hearing and to whom we can always get a response. Here in this Ayah, Allah does not say He responds to the believers only but He responds to all of mankind. Certainly, a kind Lord would not let His creation feel lonely in the sense of desertion or despair but always assured that their Lord is near and heeds them.

This Ayah shall be well reflected on when it is considered in association with the isolationism that has become so rampant in our societies today and in the developing cases of suicide. It has also been documented that loneliness and social isolation are significant public health issues.

For example, there are countries where a high proportion of the population reports feelings of loneliness or isolation in surveys. For example, almost 36% of all Americans 61% of young adults are lonely to the point of "serious loneliness," according to a report from Harvard University. More than 700,000 people worldwide die every year by suicide, the WHO says, which means someone dies by suicide every 40 seconds.

Suicide stands as among the top causes of death for 15-29-year-old people anywhere in the world. Feelings of hopelessness are a major risk factor for suicide. The likelihood of suicidal thoughts and behaviors is higher in individuals who believe they have no control over their circumstances or future.

The Merciful and Compassionate Lord is called "**Al-Wali**," which mean "**The Protecting Friend**," "**The Supporter**," or "**The Guardian**." This signifies Allah's closeness, protection, and care toward His servants. Al-Wali as Allah implies that Allah is He who looks after His believers, guides them, supports them, and becomes a friend in all circumstances.

It is in this vein that the Ayah from the Holy Quran reminds where Allah says:

"Allah is the Wali of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light."
Surah Al-Baqarah (2:257)

It gives the caring relationship Allah has with His believers, and reassures them of their friendship, guidance, and protection in every walk of life. If he keeps in mind that there is an eternal power which brings him out of darkness into light he won't commit suicide or worry about his future. Depression, anxiety, and stress are the products which originate from hopelessness and loneliness among the people. As it is said by Allah in various Ayahs that we should not be sad for He is with us.

"Do not grieve; indeed, Allah is with u."
Surah At-Tawbah (9:40)

The incident is a part of the incident of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his Companion Abu Bakr in the cave during the Hijrah, or migration from Makkah to Madinah. Abu Bakr was greatly worried about what would become of them. The Prophet comforted him.

"So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers."
Surah Aal-E-Imran (3:139)

It is said to be a verse revealed to provide solace after the defeat at Uhud. It soothes the believers not to take to heart or become sad because they are firmly on top of victory.

"And We inspired the mother of Moses, 'Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers.'"

— Surah Al-Qasas (28:7)

That verse is concerning the mother of Prophet Musa, when Allah commanded her to put the baby in the river. Allah enforces this upon her so she should not be sad or show any fear, for He would return Musa unto her, and raised him as a messenger.

These verses indicate that the believers must never be in a state of sadness and distress because Allah's help and presence are always there; Allah reassures them, "Though beleaguered, remain steadfast in faith, for Allah's help is ever near.".

Allah cannot see His people in grief, depressions, or hopelessness; He is a God who is near and always encourages them to stand firm. One remembers, while penning down this chapter, one among the most beautiful Surahs through

which Allah has shed all His mercies and love for the mankind in general and for the Prophet of Islam in particular.

After the first revelations, there was a period when Allah revealed nothing to the Prophet Muhammad. This break was referred to as Fatrah. The break brought extreme sadness and apprehension to the Prophet's heart. He would think probably Allah forsake him or he must have wrath upon him. Some of the Quraysh used to mock him in that period and say that his Lord had abandoned him. The Prophet was given even more sorrow because of it; and it is in this scenario when the revelation of Surah Ad-Duha begins.

"By the morning brightness, and [by] the night when it covers with darkness, your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O Muhammad], nor has He detested [you]. And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied."

—Surah Ad-Duha 93:1-5

This Surah was revealed at a time when the Prophet, PBUH, was dejected due to a temporary cessation of revelation, and he thought that he might have been forsaken by Allah.

Message and Importance:

Reassurance: The Surah opens up with an invocation at the light of morning and darkness of the night, signifying that just as the night finds itself succeeded by the brightness of the day, so too would the period of waiting and silence be followed by the resumption of divine revelation.

Allah's love: The whole message of the Surah is that Allah had never abandoned or forsaken the Prophet. It reassured him of Allah's continuous support and love.

Promise in the Hereafter: Allah promised that Hereafter was going to be better for the Prophet than this life, and that Allah was soon going to bestow on him so much that he would be pleased.

That was a mercy and comfort: The Prophet was hugely comforted by this Surah because it set at rest all his doubts and fears about Allah's mercy and concern for him that had cropped up due to the long pause of wahi.

It reminds man of the continuous mercy and love of Allah, particularly in times of hardship and uncertainty. It serves to comfort the believer that Allah is with him, even when he is abandoned and forlorn. The Surah teaches them patience and trust in Allah's plan because relief and divine favor are at hand.

In referring to the Prophet, Almighty Allah sent this message to the whole of humanity: never lose hope in your merciful Lord, as He is ever-near to help and comfort you. I often find myself wondering how somebody wouldn't fall in love with such a beautiful and compassionate Allah. May Allah guide us to be the obedient servants and spread the merciful attributes of Allah to humankind, so that people may willingly embrace obedience rather than by compulsion or force, as seen with terrorist organizations claiming to act in the name of Jihad.

Chapter six

Graceful Passage

“And My Mercy encompasses all things.”

Surah Al-A'raaf (7:156)

The struggle of a person throughout his life on this earth and how the Almighty Allah takes one's soul is something I want everyone to notice. Death is never less than a journey from this world to the Hereafter. The love of Allah at the time of death is undeniable. I narrate to you the story of one who has never done good; his whole life was involved in sins and disobedience. But now that he dies, Allah honors him with people, a protocol, new clothes, perfumes, and what not. Allah never says that a good believer should only have a funeral or be decorated. All His creations are loved by Allah, be it a wrongdoer or an obedient one.

This aspect of love is well explained in the Quranic verse of Surah Az-Zumar, verse 39:53:

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'"

Thus the journey of love starts from the death of an individual. When any of the individual dies, it is an obligatory act for the people to make him clean, apply perfume, and then put on new white clothes. After this process the Almighty Allah gives the individual a grand protocol in taking him to the grave, hundreds of people surrounding him in the funeral. How the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad and Quranic revelations on the departure of the good soul simply emphasize the fact that Allah loves us.

The Quran defines how Allah is careful in its pages, in Surah Al-Hadid, 57:4, "He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is a Seeing."

One of the most beautiful hadith describing the love and mercy of Allah towards His creation, even at the moment of death, is as follows:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace upon him) said:

"When the time of the believer is left in this world and he is being transferred to the next, angels whose faces are as radiant as the sun drop down from the heavens and sit in large numbers around him. Then the Angel of Death arrives and sits by his head side and says, 'O good soul, come out to forgiveness and pleasure from Allah!' Then his soul arrives as easily as a drop from the mouth of a water-skin arrives. And he (the Angel of Death) grasps it. When he has taken hold of it, the other angels do not leave it in his hand even for a twinkle of an eye. They take it and place it in a perfumed shroud, and a

scent emanates from it as if it is the sweetest musk found on the face of the earth."

Sahih Muslim

Even in Surah Al-Ankabut, the Quran, at 29:69, there is an additional reinforcement in better explaining the care of the divine:

"And those who have striven for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways.

And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good."

Just as in the following Hadith, which exemplifies the very theme and gives credence to the fact that those individuals perhaps weren't well-treated at the hands of people in this world, yet they were always under the caring and merciful eyes of Allah. It is narrated in Sahih Muslim that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"Allah, the Almighty, will thus say on the Day of Resurrection: 'O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not.' He will then say: 'O Lord, how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' Thereupon Allah will say: 'Did you not know that My bondman So-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not realize that had you visited him you would have found Me by him?'" Allah will then say: 'O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not.' He will say: 'O Lord, had I known that it was You to Whom the call was, I would have definitely fed You.'" He said: 'Had you fed him you would have found him possessing one reward for it. '" 'I

demanded from you something to drink and you did not give it to Me.' He will say: 'O Lord, how should I give it to You when You are the Lord of the worlds? 'He will say: 'My bondman So-and-so asked you for something to drink and you gave him not to drink. Had you given him to drink you would have found Me there [to have praised you for it]

The Quran also supports the significance of charity and helping the poor. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177) states:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Prophets, and gives his money, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves."

This hadith on the great love of Allah is simply incomparable. When Allah says, "I was ill, and you did not visit Me," He refers to those who are ill and absolutely have none to turn to for their support and compassion. So many people suffer from dreaded diseases like cancer and other ailments but cannot afford to get treatment from the medical profession. Treatments like ventilators are far from the reach of the middle class and poor. Their eyes show such sorrow, fighting between survival and death,

succumbing in the process due to their inability to pay their medical bills. There are heartbreaking stories of deceased persons left unclaimed, often orphans who have no family to look after them. Allah commands His believing servants to come to the rescue of such people who are undergoing severe trials.

Allah further states, "**O son of Adam, I asked you for food, and you did not feed Me.**" Indeed, in this verse of the Holy Quran, Allah speaks about persons in authority who do not help the poor man in need of food. Today, millions have nothing to fill their stomachs. With many being wealthy, they are at the same time oblivious to the starving poor. This is particularly worrying in an age when social media raises awareness but doesn't always lead to proper action. Their stories—the widows, the poor folk—tell the tale of daily struggles with hunger as days go by without a proper meal.

As of 2023, close to 735 million people worldwide go hungry, lacking sufficient food to lead healthy active lives—8.9 percent of the human population. An estimated 149.2 million children under five are stunted, and chronic malnutrition is part of their daily reality. Approximately 45 million children under five have wasting or emaciation, which is a strong predictor of mortality. Hunger and malnutrition are responsible for nearly 45 percent of all deaths of young children—about 3.1 million

children. It's estimated that hunger or hunger-related issues cause about 25,000 daily deaths, amounting to around 9 million deaths per year. These figures reflect an alarming situation, further exacerbated by hunger and weakened immunity.

Allah has ordered us to feed the needy. If even one such wealthy person comes forward to help his neighbor or poor relative, much can be done to alleviate suffering. May Allah guide us to bring relief to the ones bearing starvation and acute hunger.

The Exalted Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) attached great importance to the matter of having concern about one's neighbor in relation to food and nourishment, as reflected in this hadith: **"He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbor goes hungry" (Sunan al-Kubra al-Bayhaqi, Hadith 19049).**

And lastly, Allah says, **"I asked you for water, but you did not give Me to drink."** It means those who need water and are not able to get it. Indeed, millions of people worldwide are affected by the global water crisis. Indeed, about 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services. Almost 1.42 billion people—450 million children live in areas of high or extremely high water vulnerability. More than 2.1 million deaths occur each year, related to water-borne diseases, many of which are augmented by water scarcity. Every day, it is estimated that over 1,000-plus children die of

water- and sanitation-borne diseases that are preventable.

Donations of money or involvement with organizations that provide clean water in poor or water-scarce regions should be made. Construction of wells, development of water purification projects, and financing of infrastructure to provide access to safe water will make a large difference if pursued. The Hadith is a reminder to all the believers for serving mankind, in any form of service required. Allah commands His followers for serving people of any caste, creed, color, race, and gender, and doing so without discrimination. The Great Allah loves His creation and wants to see them attended to and not in a state of grievance.

The Holy Quran guides about the following charity and hospitable acts; in Surah Al-Insan, 76:8-9:

"They spend despite their love for it to the indigent, orphan, captive. Saying: This do we feed you only for the sake of Allah; we wish not from you any reward or thanks."

Around 2.2 billion people in the world do not have access to safe drinking water services. This shortage is a factor for increased suffering, and the provision of water is an injunction by Allah:

"O son of Adam, I asked you for water but you did not give Me to drink." (Sahih Muslim)

The Quran also acknowledges, in Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:30, through which the provision of water was a miracle:

"Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass, then We opened them out? And We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?"

His love for creation is limitless and all-embracing, expressed through His doings and guidance. Showing respect to souls at the point of death, giving emphasis on supporting the cause of the downtrodden, and calling for building compassionate communities are reflective of Allah's infinite mercy. It is when one lives by these principles that he conveys his soul in line with divine attributes, hence doing justice and showing empathy to the world. The teachings in the Quran and Hadith offer a lucid framework within which the meaning and practical application of Allah's love lead us toward a path of compassion, empathy, and support for all of creation.

Chapter seven

Kindness in Action

The best of people are those who are most beneficial to people. (Narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others)

Undeniably, Islam is a religion that preaches love to all human beings and calls for peaceful coexistence. This chapter, therefore, will examine the difference between **huquq Allah**, the rights of Allah, and **huquq al-ibad**, the rights of the people, and further outline the preeminence of **huquq al-ibad** in Islam. Moreover, Islam has a very strong emphasis on the rights and welfare of others, obviously founded on the principles of justice, compassion, and fairness. The exhortations regarding one's treatment of others abound in the Quran and Hadith, forbidding backbiting, gossip, injustice, and urging acts of kindness, respect, and concern for the fulfillment of the rights of others.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was all about serving others and providing devoted service to humanity. The whole course of his life spotted the values preached by our great Allah, who imbued human values within him. Many a time, Allah used the Quran to guide Prophet Muhammad about displaying mercy towards His creation. I would like to take this opportunity to narrate instances where the Prophet showed Allah's

compassion and mercy.

The rights of Allah are not separate from the rights of human beings. The discharge of the obligations relating to the rights of people is taken as an expression of one's surrender to Allah. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, made it clear that meeting the rights of others the poor, the deposit, the dignity of others, and so on is part of one's faith.

Reflect on the incident of the Bedouin who entered the mosque and started urinating in one corner. The companions of the Prophet became angry and wanted to intervene, but the Prophet remained cool, saying, "Do not interrupt him.". "Leave him." When the Bedouin had done, the Prophet ordered a bucket of water to go and wash the area before turning to the Bedouin, explaining graciously to him, "This mosque is not a place for such things; it is for prayer and remembrance of Allah."

This incident shows the amount of patience, forbearance, and gentleness extended toward the man by the Prophet. All these were characteristic attributes of Allah.

Although he was an element of mercy and respect during his stay in Mecca, amidst troubles and challenges imposed by his own tribe, he showed his mercy and help for a hostile woman from Quraish who came to the presence of Prophet Muhammad in a helpless condition and hence proved his promise regarding respect

toward all people irrespective of their behavior against him.

The focus of Prophet Muhammad on the rights of people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, and affiliation, was in fact representative of the divine attributes of Allah. The very name of Allah, **Al-Karim**, which literally means "The Generous" or "**The Bountiful**," portrays the attribute of Allah as one who is extremely generous and kind. The actions of the Prophet were in emulation of Allah's mercy and compassion toward creation.

When the Prophet Muhammad went to Ta'if seeking support for his mission, he faced severe hostility and physical pain. Despite this, he did not retaliate but prayed for their guidance, saying, "O Allah, guide my people, for they do not know." His response showed immense patience and deep compassion, even

towards those who mistreated him. The name of Allah that signifies His attribute of forgiveness is Al-Ghafoor, meaning "The forgiving," reflecting Allah's ability and willingness to forgive the shortcomings of His creation.

On another occasion, a young orphan girl came to the Prophet, distressed by her father's loss and lack of care shown to her. The Prophet took her under his care, provided for her needs, and treated her in gentle, respectful actions. It set an example before the believers regarding showing care

toward the orphans and the weak and helpless. Islam urges the preservation of the rights of all depressed and downtrodden segments of society, reflecting the compassion and mercy of Allah.

An important verse that shows how our Lord is concerned with the needs of orphans is:

"And they feed, in spite of love for it, the poor, the orphan, and the captive."

(Surah Al-Insan, 76:8)

It is a verse in praise of those who, despite their own needs, give to the poor, orphans, and captives. It reflects the great value placed upon caring for orphans and people in need.

Another important verse from the Quran about providing for the orphans reads:

"And do not approach the orphan's property except in a way that is best, until he reaches maturity. And fulfill the covenant. Indeed, the covenant will be questioned."

(Surah Al-Isra, 17:34)

This verse sets the tone of the responsibility of dealing with the property of the orphan with

equity and righteousness until they are mature enough to deal with it themselves, resembling the broader principle of grace and gentleness in interaction with the orphans.

How many of us today are depriving the orphan of his just share, and we are unfeeling about looking after them for nothing but the pleasure of Allah? Allah time and again draws our attention to the orphans, the poor, and the needy.

Thus, their rights deserve to be a priority as well. The name of Allah giving the sense of His being the One caring for orphans is "**Al-Muqsit**," which means "The Just." It is interpreted as an attribute of God, whereby it is said He is just and fair, such that He commands the rights of the orphans and others be preserved and upheld.

"And do not eat up your property among yourselves by false means, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly **a little of (other) people's property.**"

(Surat Al-Baqarah 2:188)

This ayah denounces the intake and usage of other people's wealth without justification and insists on respect and protection of other people's rights.

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, or your relatives."

(Surah An-Nisa, 4:135)

In this scripture, one will note that one is supposed to be firm and just in all transactions when defending the rights of others.

"Whoever does not show mercy to our young ones, or recognize the honor due to our elders, is not one of us."

(Sunan Abi Dawood)

This Hadith shows how Prophet Muhammad imparted the lesson of compassion and respect for others, whether they were younger or older.

"Jibril kept advising me about the neighbor until I thought he would assign a share of the inheritance."

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

This Hadith indicates how much importance the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gave to the fulfillment of the rights of neighbors, as the Angel Gabriel kept on advising him about this matter time and again.

The same brotherhood is in harmony and balance in Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:10, as it says:

**"The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers.
And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."**

The Quran conveys a message over and over again that God will not be miserly in reward for his spending in charitable acts. Functional utility of charitable acts is best shown by the following verse:

"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a grain of corn that grows seven ears; in every ear, there are a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:261)

Also, Allah says in Surah Al-Hadid (57:18) that those who spend in charity will attain an immense reward:

"Truly. Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and do so in a way that they do not associate their giving with the recipients; for them is their reward with their Lord, and shall have no fear upon them, neither will they grieve."

The another beautiful Hadith of the prophet I wanna mention here that makes it very explicit that Muslims have certain rights over each other, relations should be maintained, and mutual responsibility should be fulfilled.

"The rights of a Muslim over another Muslim are six." They asked, "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "When you meet him, greet him with peace; when he invites you, accept the invitation; when he seeks your advice, give him advice; when he sneezes and praises Allah, say 'Yar-hamuk Allah' (May Allah have mercy on you); when he is ill, visit him; and when he is dead, attend his funeral."

I always relate such kind features of our beloved Prophet to our beloved Lord because his actions signify our beloved Allah's image and affection for us.

Therefore, the beautiful story of:

The stories told regarding the Prophet Muhammad's concern over the debts of the dead, the best-known story is that of a man by the name of Jabir ibn Abdullah. Jabir told that a man from the Ansar (the helpers of Medina) died and left behind him debts. On his deathbed, he said, "I am more deserving of being the guardian of the deceased than the deceased himself." So, when this man

passed, the Prophet finally committed himself fully to pay off this man's due debts just from his property alone. It signifies that even after one's death, the Prophet continued to perform his sunnah by regarding the other people. This only goes to show the seriousness with which Islam regards the issue of debt repayment and the honoring of obligations, be they for or from the dead.

Another story is that in which he honored the soul of a dead disbeliever. **"Once, a funeral procession, of a Jew was passing before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him.) He stood up. The people said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah. It was a Jew.' He said: 'Is it not a soul?'**

The act was no less than based on his respect for human dignity, regardless of religious affiliation, and on the importance of acts of kindness and respect even toward those who are not Muslims.

Later on, a large number of his mettlesome enemies had to come under his mercy after the conquest of Mecca. He forgave them instead of retaliating with full vengeance and said, "Go, for you are free." An act of such forgiveness and mercy toward others who have wronged him time after time is an example of how prophets' lives should be in a pursuit of Allah's qualities of mercy.

This story is demonstrative of the mercy of Allah through, for example, the case of the woman who was known to be an evildoer. However, she truly repented and returned to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet accepted her repentance, showed her care and respect, and told her about the mercy Allah had reserved for those who would sincerely return to Him, no matter what they had done in the past.

Allah's love for his creation in the Holy Quran:
O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them.

(Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:11)

And do not insult one another and do not call each other by offensive nicknames. Woe to those who use offensive nicknames, and do not repent; they are the wrongdoers.

(Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:11)

This ayah teaches that a believer should not sneer at or humiliate others by giving them nicknames that offend and mortify them, for these actions hurt good relationships and personnel dignity.

"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him in

increasing weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination."

(Surah Luqman, 31:14)

This verse reminds the believing soul of the obligation he has to show gratitude and courtesy to his parents, a part of the general principle of discharging the rights of others.

"He who cares for an orphan and myself will be together in Paradise like this," and he joined his two fingers together.

(Sahih al-Bukhari)

The following Hadith shows the reward and importance of taking care of orphans, particularly identifying their rights in society. Paradise shall surely be granted to those who put the rights of orphans at the forefront of priorities. What a beautiful religion that deals with dispensing justice, being fair, equitable, and merciful toward others.

"Do not backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful."

(Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12)

This verse reflects annoyance over backbiting and slander, and as such, presents a strong case for maintaining respect for others' dignity and rights to personal privacy. Backbiting has become quite commonplace today. Allah loves His creation so much that He does not even want to hear the backbiting of people against others. He warns against speaking ill of others with disrespect while backbiting. Backbiting is a practice through which a person not only violates someone's rights but also degrades and harms the reputation of that particular person. It causes negative effects on their personal life, societal position, and even in political and economic life. I pray to Allah, the Great, to guide us not to fall into backbiting and to preserve the rights of others.

I would like to conclude this chapter by narrating a beautiful Hadith that explains the mutual rights we owe each other:

"Whoever relieves a believer's distress from the distressful aspects of this world, Allah will relieve his distress from the distresses of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever helps ease the burden of someone in difficulty, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and the Hereafter."

(Sahih Muslim)

People are here in this world to relieve the pains of fellow beings. Clearly, it is mentioned in the Holy Quran, "Whoever helps ease the burden of

someone in difficulty, Allah will make it easy for them." How beautiful is our Lord! The loving Lord, who is more concerned with His creation as compared to anything else that exists in this world.

In other words, while the rights of Allah occupy the central position within Islamic worships, the rights of others are by no means less in importance. *Huquq al-Ibad* not only envisions achieving social justice and harmony but also serves as an indicator of a person's actual compliance with the guidance rendered by Allah. The comprehensive approach of Islam treats the two sets of rights in integrated ways, where *Huquq al-Ibad* acts as a practical manifestation for how one genuinely lives according to faith and commitment to ethical living. Allah created this world for us and made us the best of His creation. The life of the Holy Prophet is a testimony to how Allah sent His merciful Prophet to preach peace and to show His creation their beloved God and immense mercy.

Chapter Eight

The Healing Power of Tawakkul

Say, 'Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.' And upon Allah let the believers rely."

Surah At-Tawbah (9:51)

Tawakkul is the belief in absolute trust in Allah. The Holy Quran wants to emphasize that no matter what kind of test the servant faces, a true servant never gives up his faith from Allah. From Prophet Adam to the Seal of Prophets, Muhammad (PBUH), all stories of the Prophets are replete with examples demonstrating unflinching trust in the Eternal King, Allah. They are the stories that remind us to put our trust in Allah since such trust will always be greeted with Allah's mercy and miraculous blessings in our lives. Almighty Allah never lets any of His true believers down; He returns to them manifold from where they least expected it to come, as a reward for their unquestionable faith. I practically have observed in my life that whenever I trusted Allah, He opened the doors of miracles for me and gave me the best. This tawakkul is a part of our faith and gives positivism a boost within us. Before referencing Hadith and the Quran, I want to explore the positive impact of Tawakkul on the brain from a neuroscience perspective.

Tawakul and Neuroscience:

Only recently has neuroscience come to realize more about the deep influence Tawakkul-trust in Allah-and positive thinking have on the functioning of our brain and therefore on our health. The present neuro-scientific understanding explains the Tawakkul and positivity effects on the brain and our lives, as follows:

Lower levels of stress and more resiliency:

Tawakkul is trust in Allah's wisdom and surrender to his plan, and rather alleviating of stress it is. This has been proven by neuroscientific research that positive outlooks and trust in higher powers trigger the reward centers in the brain and lessen the production of the stress hormone cortisol. Such diminished levels of stress have a positive effect on mental invincibility and general health. It is possible that positive emotions and faith practices can regulate the autonomic nervous system, resulting in relaxation and physiological stress diminishment.

Improved Regulation of Emotions:

Positivity, an ingredient of Tawakkul, paves the way for better emotional management. The prefrontal cortex is that component of the brain known for decision-making and self-control. This part works efficiently when a person is in a hopeful and trusting state of mind. At a basic

level, positive thoughts and faith could provide additional capacity to the brain in dealing with its emotional elements. Hence, emotional stability would increase and mental health would improve.

Improved Brain Function:

A positive attitude that Tawakkul is associated with can yield cognitive enhancement. Under such conditions of belief and trust, levels of anxiety and depression are at a minimum. They normally negatively affect cognition. Positive feelings and trust enhance memory, concentration, and problem-solving by increasing neural plasticity and connectivity in the brain.

Greater Social Connection and Support:

It is accompanied by a sense of community and social support to believe in Tawakkul. Positive relationships and social interactions turn on the reward system of the brain, releasing certain neurotransmitters like oxytocin and dopamine associated with pleasure and bonding. This social support is important for mental well-being and thus buffers the effects of stress, thereby improving life satisfaction.

Improved Immune Function:

This principle is similar to a previous one: there is proof that positivity and trust have an enhancing effect on the immune system. While chronic stress and bad emotions can depressed immune function, a positive attitude and faith

are known to enhance immune responses. Neuroscience provides evidence that lower levels of stress associated with Tawakkul and a positive disposition should be related to superior immunological health and, therefore, to a lower sickness rate.

Better Satisfaction with Life:

It will eventually lead to increased life satisfaction, general health, and trust in Allah. Feelings of contentment and gratitude are usually present in tawakkul, and when these feelings enter the brain, it turns on the reward pathways of the brain, hence leading to increased satisfaction. Living a more fully satisfied, meaningful life is a result of this, which again involves all the effects that positivity has on mental and physical health.

Research shows a strong and positive correlation between faith and spirituality, regarding lower levels of anxiety and depression. A recent study published in Psychiatry Research, for instance, disclosed that the presence of spiritual beliefs and practice, like trusting in a higher power, relieves the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

The evidence from several studies supports the advantages of Tawakkul (trust in Allah) in various aspects of life. From mental and physical health to the spheres of relationships, personal growth, and coping strategies, trust in Allah and positive outlook demonstrate that these conditions yield better wellbeing and a more successful life.

One of the most touching stories beginning with this Tawakkul is that of the Prophet Yusuf and his father, the Prophet Yaqub.

Prophet Yusuf was the son of the Prophet Yaqub and the great grandson of the Prophet Ibrahim. Yusuf's trials began early in his life, as his jealous step brothers sold him for a paltry sum of money and left him in a well. The darkness and despair of his situation did not dent Yusuf's faith in Allah. He was determined that Allah would not forsake him, believing firmly that a miracle was on its way. He held this strong belief; one on which his faith hinged, due to which he rose to become the king of Egypt.

Yusuf's story, from the well to Misr's throne, was one of trials. One of them is being put behind bars. Still, in the prison, his Tawakkul in Allah did not break. He was quite sure that Allah will release him from those chains, just as he was quite convinced that one day, after all those years of separation, he would be reunited with his dear father Yaqub.

Equally powerful is the story of Prophet Yaqub. His Sabr and Tawakkul in Allah did not fall apart when all those years had passed by without any word of Yusuf. The deep faith Yaqub had never failed, not even in the presence of skepticism by his children. Whenever his other sons would mock him, saying that Yusuf would never come back, the answer lay in Yaqub's unyielding faith: "I believe in Allah that one day I will meet my son Yusuf." This kept him going through the forty long years of separation until

Allah, in His mercy, reunited father and son.

The story of Yusuf and Yaqub is such an immortal reminder that Allah never forsakes the ones who put their trust in Him. Personally, I have been a part of quite a good number of Tawakkul miracles. Whenever I commit my affairs to Allah with a sound heart, He never disappoints me. Thus, the nearest personal experience that came to aid in reinforcing this reality was the fact that Tawakkul in Allah brings out the most beautiful outturn, even in the case of most unsurpassable challenges.

Similarly, when his people threw Prophet Ibrahim, AS, into the fire, that was the epitome of Tawakkul. As he was about to be cast into the fire, he said, **"Allah is sufficient for me, and He is the best disposer of affairs" (Hasbiyallahu wa ni'mal wakeel).**

Allah ordered the fire to be cool and safe for Ibrahim, and he came out untouched. This is one of the most wonderful examples of trust in Allah when it seems hopeless.

During the period of the prophet Ibrahim, there was no one to save him from burning, yet he had not lose his conviction in Allah and stood firm in his commitment that Allah will not leave him to burn here. Whosoever leave his affair in the disposal of Allah then Allah becomes suffice for him/her. Just imagine the scenario when prophet Ibrahim thrown into the fire by his people and the dire situation was crucial to let

his tawakul loosen but he had even not doubt that in Allah's miracles and his help. Eventually, the Almighty Allah never leaves his believers to be disappointed after having tawakul in him.

Allah tested Ibrahim, the prophet, in various ways during his life; the greatest test was when he was ordered to sacrifice his beloved son, Ismail. It was a clear state of emotional turmoil for both Ibrahim and Ismail as they were submitting their will to Allah. Immediately after Ibrahim was about to sacrifice his son, Allah intervened and provided a ram instead to be sacrificed.

In this case, one can see how All-mighty Allah helps His believers. Prophet Ibrahim was a father; if someone is a father, he can understand the immense love for his children. When Allah ordered Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his beloved son, who had been born after several years, when he ordered, the prophet did not show any reluctance to sacrifice his son. But Allah never leaves his believers to be sad, so Allah intervened.

And when he reached with him the age of exertion, he said, 'O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I sacrifice you; so see what you think.' He said, 'O my father do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.' -Quran 37:102

On the other occasion, when Allah instructed Prophet Ibrahim to leave wife Hajra and the infant son Ismail in Makkah's arid valley, what

showed up then was much trust in Allah from both Ibrahim and Hajra. Hajra asked Ibrahim if Allah had instructed him to do so. Upon his affirmation, Hajra, in spite of the condition's bitterness, put her entire trust in Allah. As Ibrahim turned to leave them, she asked, "**Has Allah commanded you to do this?**" On his affirmative reply, she said, "Then He will not forsake us."

Thus, left in that desolate region and having little on them, Hajra began to search for water by running back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwah, depicting struggle and trust in Allah simultaneously. So, after the seventh attempt, Allah replied with the sending of Jibreel, the angel, who hit the ground with his wing, and out came the Zamzam well; it has flowed to this day through the centuries, quenching the thirst of millions of pilgrims by being a timeless example of Allah's mercy and the power of Tawakkul.

"And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ismail, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing.'
" Q. 2:127

Another reminder for us is the story of firm faith in Allah, the story of Bibi Hajra. How much the true believers accept every commandment of Allah: when the prophet was commanded to leave them in the barren land of Makkah, both

husband and wife showed trust in Allah. The Prophet Ismail grew up there without his father. It is one scenario which one can analyze: the distance between his beloved son from Ibrahim was not an easy task, but he did it for the sake of Allah. Like this, Allah commands again to the prophet to give the sacrifice of Prophet Ismail, who had spent his whole life without his father. When Prophet Ibrahim told him, "I am here to give your sacrifice," Prophet Ismail even did not show any reluctance to say no, "You cannot," but said, "I accept the commandment of Allah.". The story of Prophet Musa also epitomizes a superb reminder of Tawakul in Allah and the help directed towards the believers.

When the Prophet Musa drew out the Children of Israel from Egypt, they were met with Pharaoh and his army in hot pursuit. Then, when they came to the Red Sea, the people turned about in fright, trapped between the sea and Pharaoh's forces, until Musa reassured them: **"Put your trust in Allah if you really are believers."** And Allah parted the sea, so they crossed over safely. Pharaoh and his army were drowned as they tried to follow.

And when the two hosts sighted each other, the companions of Moses said, 'Indeed, we are to be overtaken!' [Musa] said, 'No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.' Then We inspired to Moses, **'Strike with your staff the sea,' and it parted, and each portion was as a huge towering mountain."** (Quran 26:61-63)

It is with Tawakkul in Allah that Musa strikes the sea with his staff and gets himself and others crossed safely. It is a strong lesson of trusting Allah in times of adversity. The prophets' situation was troublesome. The horrific Pharoah army was behind him, and at the other side, there was the sea in front of him. They struck between the Pharoah army and the sea. But it was in this jittery time that the words of Prophet Musa were very important reminding us all of how Tawakul works in these kinds of difficult times. Almighty Allah did not disappoint him but showed him a miracle : the sea parted, allowing them to cross safely. The sea parted into two ways, just imagine that scenario when people saw the miracle of Allah in return for Musa's firm faith in Allah. Indeed, believer never loose his trust in his beloved rab and Allah never disappoints.

The another prophet is a best reminder of his conviction in Allah. Prophet Yunus got into the belly of whale after he tried to leave his people out of frustration.

Realizing his mistake, he turned to Allah with complete trust and supplication, saying, **"There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers"** (Quran 21:87).

Allah responded to his pure Tawakkul and saved him by releasing him from the belly of the whale. The prophet Yunus had not disappointed but granted help from Allah and kept his belief that

Allah will help him and accept his dua. May Allah give us Hidayah to be his favorite Mumineen and have faith in His plans.

On the other hand, Prophet Nuh AS was sent to guide his people who went far from the worship of Allah. He preached for 950 years, and very few accepted him. His people ridiculed him and did not regard his warnings of a great flood. Even in the midst of that mockery, Nuh was fully submissive and therefore followed the command of Allah to build an ark.

Truly, it was only those that believed in him and rode with him in the ark that were salvaged when the flood came; the disbelieving ones were drowned.

The prophet Nuh had 950 years, all in life but consistently strove in the way of Allah and preached. He never despaired and built an ark. People ridiculed him in many ways, but he believed and, in the end, when everything was done, Allah saved him and the believers from the flood and made him one of the most liked believers. Prophet Nuh did not give up his trust in Allah until the people of his own nation ridiculed him and opposed him. He completely believed in the command of Allah, and he was sure that the promise of Allah would be fulfilled.

"And make the ship under Our eyes and Our

inspiration, and do not address Me concerning those who have wronged; indeed, they are to be drowned." (Quran 11:37)

It is said that during the Hijrah, the migration to Medina, prophet Mohammed and his close friend, Abu Bakr, RA had taken shelter in a Cave. The Quraysh were looking for them and came so close to the cave that Abu Bakr RA was anxious. The Prophet comforted him: "Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us" (Quran 9:40).

Our Prophet's Tawakkul in Allah saved them from the danger, and they were not found by Quraysh. It only showed that our beloved prophet had strong faith in Allah whenever he faced any disturbances and problems.

The other vital story that shows the aspect of the unwavering confidence in Allah possessed by Prophet Muhammad is the Battle of Badr. The battle was the very first critical encounter between the early Muslims and the Quraysh of Makkah; hence, it serves as a strong and vital example of Tawakkul, Trust in Allah even in utterly odd situations.

It was in the information of the Muslims of Madinah, in the second year after Hijrah, that a great caravan of the Quraysh led by Abu Sufyan was coming from Syria rich in its merchandise and wealth. Therefore, as a strategic measure, the Muslims decided to intercept it to weaken the power of the Quraysh to persecute them. However, the Quraysh got wind of the Muslims' intentions and hastily mustered over 1,000 hired

fighters to guard the caravan and fight the Muslims.

On the other hand, the Muslim army was very small in number; it barely reached 300 souls, poorly equipped, and with a high rate of scarcity of arms and armor. In number and weapons, they were outstripped hugely and out-matched in means.

Despite all the odds, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad remained steadfast and truly relied upon Allah. On the night before the battle, he spent the whole night in prayer, imploring Allah to seek victory. His supplication mirrored his deep Tawakkul: "**O Allah, if You do not grant us victory, there will remain no one on earth to worship You.**" He realized that it was not a question of mere survival but about the future of Islam.

On the battlefield, the Prophet demonstrated his trust in Allah; he kept cheering his men up, and they heard from him that they were not struggling right there alone. In his response, the Quran states that Allah replied to the prayers of the Prophet and dispatched angels to assist the Muslims on that day.

Allah helped you at Badr when you were a contemptible little force; so fear Allah, that ye may be grateful. Remember when ye said to the faithful: "Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels specially sent down upon you?" Indeed. if ye show patience and piety, and the enemy rush at you suddenly, your Lord will help you with five thousand angels as a reinforcement having

distinctive marks.

Though this would have been difficult for Muslims who were outnumbered and without arms, it was through their faith and dependence on Allah they won a clear victory. The Quraysh had been defeated, and many of their leaders had either been killed or taken prisoner, which was in effect a radical turn of events for the Muslim community.

Another example of Tawakkul can be seen in the story of the People of the Cave as indicated in Surah Al-Kahf. A group of young men who at first were believers in Allah, were outcasts by their folk who were idolaters, run into a cave for refuge, relying on Allah to protect them from their enemies.

At that moment, Allah made them sleep within the cave for 309 years in total security and safety until they arose and found their society had shifted and people now embraced monotheism. Theirs is the ultimate example of the power of Allah's protection and guidance to those who put their trust in Him.

"When the youths took refuge in the cave and said, 'Our Lord, grant us mercy from Yourself and guide us in our affair rightly.'"

— Surah Al-Kahf, Ayah 10

The story of Prophet Zakarya is the reminder of how a true believer believes in Allah and asks for difficult things from Allah;

Although he was very old, and his wife was infertile, the Prophet Zakariya (AS) had strong Tawakkul and prayed to Allah fervently to grant him the gift of a righteous heir to carry forward the task of shepherding the Children of Israel on the path of guidance. So, against all worldly odds, Allah, complementing his Tawakkul, bestowed upon Prophet Zakariyya (AS) the son of Prophethood, Prophet Yahya (AS). In this, there lies the significance of the story: nothing is impossible for Allah, and heartfelt invocation with steadfast trust in the wisdom of Allah can result in results beyond imagination, only reinstating the fact that a true believer must always repose hope and trust in the plan of Allah.

A very nice afterthought of the dua by Zakariya is captured in Surah Maryam.

He said, 'My Lord indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy. And verily I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from You an heir who shall inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob; and make him, my Lord, a pleasing one'."

— Surah Maryam, Ayahs 4-6

It was in total Tawakkul that Zakariya made this du'a', being sure that Allah could and would give

him a child when it was physiologically not possible. So, still strong was his faith that he could make what was a seemingly unrealizable request with the fullest confidence and trust in the power and rahma of Allah.

Allah, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, answered the prayer of Zakariya in a manner that epitomizes the strength of Tawakkul. Although Zakariya himself and his wife were very, very old, Allah did send an angel to bring forth the glad tidings:

"[He was told], 'O Zakariya, indeed We give you good tiding of a boy whose name will be Yahya. We have not assigned to any before [this] name.'"

The information was rather overwhelming for Zakariya (AS), Not from disbelief though, but because of the miraculousness in it .He said ; **'My Lord, how shall I have a boy when my wife has been barren, so that I have become decrepit from it?'**

Surah Maryam, Ayah 8

The angel then quelled his fears ,saying :

"[The angel] said, 'Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, " It is easy for Me, for I created you before, while you were nothing."

Surah Maryam, Ayah 9

Bibi Maryam (AS), who was the mother of Prophet Isa (AS), and become one of the best examples of steadfast Tawakkul, exclusively depicted it by not losing hope and holding strong reliance on the Almighty throughout. It is actually known that Maryam had to undergo severe challenges of the life related to social stigmatism and isolation until that miracle conception and birth of her son. But Allah provided her with a miraculous provision of fresh dates and cool water from the palm tree in a desolate place. The miraculous provision that happened by shaking the tree further showed Allah's mercy to reaffirm the Tawakkul.

Tawakkul is Maryam's reliance wholly upon Allah's wisdom, and her satisfaction with the situation, apart from many other instances of patience in this great example given to all Muslims, in addition to the lessons concerning the most central point of faith—that one should trust in Allah even through the most severe trials.

"When the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary— distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those who are near [to Allah].'"

— Surah Aal-e-Imran, Ayah 45

One of the most famous of these miracles is that

which concerns the miraculous provision of fruits to Maryam. The fruits were provided when she had been sequestered in the Temple, where she was being supplied with fresh fruits, out of season. This was a direct sign from Allah, a mercy, and a reward for her unshakeable faith. And Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her private part, so We breathed into it of Our inspiration and she fulfilled the prophecies contained in her book and she was one of the obedient.

Surah At-Tahrim, 12

And shake the trunk of this palm tree towards you; It will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you. And shake to yourself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will fall fresh and mature dates on you. And cause a river to gush forth beneath you."

Surah Maryam, Verses 25-26

Maryam was told to shake the trunk of a foliaged date tree, which would make fresh dates fall down to provide her with food and water. That tree was there for it to be shown that human life can be sustained even though humans could not see the sustainer acting in that guise. For sure, for Allah, nothing can be difficult, and Allah shows miracles to His believers who trust and rely on Him for everything.

Prophet Ayub, a man who had been given much, in terms of wealth, health, and family, was tried to his limit by Allah. What did he not lose? His wealth, children, health—he was stricken by an

excruciating, repulsive disease. Still, Ayub never lost heart, nor did he slacken his quick step in the way of Allah. He never complained but insisted to always trust the wisdom of Allah. After years of patience and unshaken faith, Allah restored not only the health of his servant to Ayub, but his wealth and family as well, in a way that is very rewarding, for the steadfast.

"And remember when he cried to his Lord: Verily distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy." So We answered his call. We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his family to him and along with them the like thereof as a mercy from Us and a reminder for all those who worship Us. "

Q21:83-84

Prophet Ayub (AS) is one of the greatest examples of Tawakkul through his patience and trust in Allah during immense suffering. He did have serious rebukes but stuck to his beliefs and had tawakul (trust) in Allah, who would soon make him among the healthy people and that his family would be back.

The stories of the prophets have been highlighted to show clearly how they retained their unshakeable link with Allah, remained firm in faith, and relied upon Him alone. His mercy is without limit, and He does display man His wondrous miracles if he has faith that is firm and complete in submission to Him. Reflecting on these stories, it can be easily identified that Allah never lets his believers down; He rewards them with plenty and in fact fills their lives with

happiness and pleasure. If one has belief in Allah, He grants from where one cannot imagine. I personally have experienced such miracles by having faith and also seen how other people's lives changed. May Allah make us those who never lose hope in Him, and may we be in His favored servants. Ameen.

The next topic shall bring into focus Allah's mercy towards those who, living a life of sin, have divine compassion showered upon them, and are guided onto the path of righteousness.

Chapter Nine

Redemption's Promise

“My mercy has preceded My anger.” (Hadith, Sahih Muslim)

While explaining the role that Tawakkul and authentic expectations from Allah play to bring fruitful results in a believer's life, the merciful nature of Allah toward His disobedient servants has to be presented as well. It can easily be explained with the help of the Quranic verse in which Allah ordered Prophet Musa to speak softly while talking to Pharaoh, although Pharaoh was an oppressor and brutal.

Therefore, Allah's command to Musa is a marvelous example of Allah's limitless mercy and soft-heartedness. Through His infinite mercy, Allah always desires that His slave should repent and come back to the righteous path. He accepts atonement and is ever-eager to exonerate those who turn towards Him in a graceful way. Much as people have persisted in grievous sins, the mercy of Allah remains infinite, hoping that they will mend their ways and seek entry into Jannah. He esteems the slightest signs of devotion shown by His slaves to the Deity and forgives them handsomely.

In the following paragraphs, we shall try to cover the compassionate nature of our Lord and his merciful actions. We begin with the Quranic verse relating to Musa and Pharaoh, where it is said that the mercy of Allah is enduring and He wants His servants to redeem themselves.

The Quranic verse in which **Allah commands**

Prophet Musa (Moses) to speak gently to Pharaoh is found in Surah Ta-Ha, Ayah 44:

"But speak to him mildly; perhaps he may accept admonition or fear (Allah)."
(Surah Ta-Ha, 20:44)

Looking into the verse under discussion, we see the insistence to speak softly and with humility, even when describing a tyrant like Pharaoh. Allah has sent Prophet Musa to Pharaoh to tell him his faults in a hope that he regains his sanity and

slides back unto the right path, approved by Allah—but with soft insistence, being Pharaoh's sins and oppressing of Allah's people were most serious. It reflects so vividly how merciful our Lord is: **Al-Ghafur, Al-'Afuww, Al-Hannan, and Al- Mannan.** This verse reminds one of the Allah's tenderness and deep affection towards his creation.

The narration of Jibril filling the mouth of Pharaoh with mud elaborates another direction of Allah's mercy. When Pharaoh himself was drowning in the sea, after he had chased Prophet Musa and the Israelites into it, he tried to proclaim his faith in Allah. However, the angel Jibril (Gabriel) came and filled Pharaoh's mouth with mud so he could not pronounce a false testimony of faith. The act by the angel Jibril was against insincere repentance made out of desperation but not a change of heart.

It is often said that Allah is Al-Ghafur and He would have accepted Pharaoh's repentance if not for Jibril's interference. This caring attention to Allah's mercy is somewhat striking, for in normal usage, the word "Allah" is not juxtaposed by most scholars. Anyway, Allah explicitly is purported to be Al-Rahman, Al-Raheem, Al-Ghafoor. For this reason, I keep saying repeatedly in my chapters that Allah does not want to send His people to Hell but is always willing to let people come into the beautiful Jannah He has promised to give us in the Holy Quran.

"For those who are conscious of their Lord, there will be lofty mansions, one above another, beneath which rivers flow. (This is) the promise of Allah, and Allah does not fail in His promise."

(Surah Al-Furqan, 25:75)

The depth of Allah's love for His creation is, as a matter of fact, beyond worldly limits. He fashioned everything with a view to keeping our needs in mind and looks after us in all possible ways. His mercy and love are something which is simply immeasurable and incomparable. Now, let's consider some stories through which the boundless compassion of Allah has been brought out in a very striking manner.

The Story of the Man Who Killed 99 People

One of the most well-known stories of Allah's

forgiveness is about a man who had committed numerous murders and sought repentance.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"There was a man among those who came before you who killed ninety-nine people, then he asked about the most knowledgeable person on earth, and he was directed to a monk. He went to him and said that he had killed ninety-nine people and asked whether he could repent. The monk said, 'No,' so he killed him, thus completing one hundred. Then he asked about the most knowledgeable person on earth, and he was directed to a scholar. He said that he had killed one hundred people and asked whether he could repent. The scholar said, 'Yes, what is there to keep you from repenting? Go to such-and-such a land; there are people who worship Allah there. Go and worship Allah with them, and do not go back to your own land, for it is a bad place.' So the man set out, and when he had traveled halfway, death came to him. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment argued over him. The angels of mercy said, 'He had repented and was seeking Allah.' The angels of punishment said, 'He never did any good thing.' Then an angel in the form of a human being came to them, and they made him a judge between them. He said, 'Measure the distance between the two lands. Whichever of the two he is closer to, that is where he belongs.' So they measured it and found that he was closer to the land

where he intended to go, so the angels of mercy took him."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3470; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2766

The mercy of our Lord is deep and incomprehensible to human beings. How often do we lose hope in someone's goodness or judge a person harshly based on his or her past sins and forget that the mercy of Allah is beyond human calculation? His compassion has no measure and is beyond all human calculation.

Consider the case of the man who killed ninety-nine people and even a monk. He, however, had not lost hope in Allah's mercy. Therefore, the story very strongly puts forth the lesson that no sin, however great in heinousness, cannot be washed away by true repentance and a firm resolve to reform; hence, therefore, it is never too late to seek Allah's forgiveness. Mercifully, Allah did not let him down but welcomed him into the people of Jannah. **SubhanAllah!** It serves to remind everyone that Allah's Forgiveness is unending and He is ever-eager to accept any and all who resort to him with a pure heart.

The Story of the Woman Who Committed Adultery

Another story of Allah's forgiveness involves a woman from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who committed adultery and sought to be purified.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated:

"There came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a woman from the tribe of Ghāmid and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed adultery, so purify me.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) turned her away. On the following day, she said: 'O Messenger of Allah, why do you turn me away? Perhaps you want to turn me away as you turned away Ma'iz. By Allah, I am pregnant.' He said to her: 'If you insist upon it, then go away until you give birth.' When she delivered, she came with the child wrapped in a piece of cloth and said: 'Here is the child whom I have given birth to.' He said: 'Go away and suckle him until you wean him.' When she had weaned him, she came to him with the child, who was holding a piece of bread in his hand. She said: 'O Messenger of Allah, here he is, I have weaned him and he is eating food.' He (the Prophet) entrusted the child to one of the Muslims and then pronounced punishment. She was buried and the Prophet prayed over her."

(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1695)

The Story of the Prostitute Who Gave Water to a Dog

This is a famous story that exemplifies how even small acts of kindness can lead to Allah's forgiveness, regardless of one's past sins.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"A prostitute was forgiven by Allah because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe and tied it to her scarf and drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave her because of that."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3321; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2245)

The story demonstrates very clearly the fact that Allah's mercy is indeed boundless. A small act of kindness, if it is done sincerely enough, will merit Allah's forgiveness, no matter how grave the person's sins are. Here, while she had committed major sins, Allah was happy with her minor act of kindness and forgave her. That is the very essence of our beautiful and compassionate Lord. My heart and the hearts of my family are filled with the purest love for Allah, infinite in mercy.

The Story of the Thief Who Stole from the Kaaba

There is also a story about a man who stole a valuable piece from the Kaaba and then deeply regretted his actions. It is narrated that during the time of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, a man stole a piece of the Kaaba's covering. He felt such deep remorse that he went to Caliph Umar and confessed his sin. He cried bitterly and sought forgiveness.

Umar, seeing the man's sincere repentance, forgave him and asked him to return the stolen item, which he did.

This story reflects the Islamic principle that sincere repentance and making amends for one's wrongs can lead to forgiveness, even for serious transgressions.

The Story of the Companion Who Repented After Committing a Major Sin

There is a famous story of a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) named Ka'b ibn Malik, who, along with two others, stayed behind during the Battle of Tabuk without a valid excuse.

Ka'b ibn Malik felt deep remorse for his actions and was shunned by the community for fifty days as part of his penance. Finally, Allah revealed a verse in the Quran forgiving Ka'b and the others.

"And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness, and their souls confined them, and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful."
(Surah At-Tawbah, 9:118)

The Story of Prophet Adam (AS) and Hawwa (Eve)

The story of Prophet Adam and Hawwa (Eve) is another significant example of Allah's mercy and forgiveness. After they ate from the forbidden tree in Paradise, they realized their mistake and sought Allah's forgiveness.

"They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.' Allah said, 'Descend, being to one another enemies. And for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment for a time.' He said, 'Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth.' Then Adam received from his Lord words [of revelation], and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful."

(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:37)

These stories collectively demonstrate the vastness of Allah's mercy and the importance of sincere repentance in Islam. Allah is always ready to forgive those who turn back to Him, no matter how great their sins may be.

The Story of the Man and Prophet Musa (Moses)

According to Islamic tradition, there was once a man who approached Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) and asked him to convey a few personal requests or prayers to Allah when he went to meet Him on Mount Sinai (Kohe Toor).

The man said to Prophet Musa:

"O Musa, when you speak to your Lord on the mountain, please ask Him to give me a good harvest and to make my life easier. I am struggling and facing many difficulties. Please intercede on my behalf."

Musa agreed and promised to relay the man's requests to Allah.

However, when Musa (peace be upon him) ascended Mount Sinai and stood in the presence of Allah, he was overwhelmed by the experience and forgot to mention the man's requests.

After Musa (peace be upon him) descended from the mountain, the man eagerly approached him and asked, "O Musa, did you relay my requests to your Lord?"

Musa (peace be upon him) then realized that he had forgotten to mention them. He felt ashamed and told the man that he had forgotten. The man was disappointed but understood.

Then, the man later approached Musa (peace be upon him) again, and Musa promised to relay the requests the next time he ascended the mountain.

When Musa (peace be upon him) returned to Mount Sinai, he stood before Allah and this time remembered the man's requests. However, before Musa could speak, Allah, in His infinite knowledge and mercy, said:

"O Musa, tell My servant that before he asked, I was already aware of his needs. I am

the All-Knowing, and I have already granted him what he sought before you even came to Me with his requests."

When Musa (peace be upon him) returned to the man and relayed Allah's response, the man was deeply moved and filled with gratitude. He realized that Allah's knowledge and mercy are so vast that He knew of his needs and had already taken care of them without the need for intercession.

The Incident of the Manna and Quail

After the Israelites were saved from Pharaoh and wandered in the desert, they faced hardships, including hunger and thirst. In response to their needs, Allah provided them with miraculous sustenance: manna (a type of sweet sustenance) and quail (a type of bird), which sustained them during their time in the wilderness.

Allah says in the Quran:

"And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], 'Eat from the good things with which We have provided you.' And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves."
(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:57)

Despite their previous disobedience and complaints, Allah continued to show mercy by providing for their physical needs in a

miraculous way.

This story illustrates Allah's mercy in providing for the Israelites, even when they were in a state of disobedience or ingratitude. It underscores Allah's nurturing care and generosity toward His people.

The Story of Regret and Redemption

In a small village nestled in the desert, a man named Tariq lived a life marked by numerous wrongdoings. Tariq had committed sins and transgressions, and though he often felt a pang of regret, he struggled to change his ways. The weight of his actions bore heavily upon him, and he found himself unable to escape the feeling of impending doom.

One day, Tariq decided to seek guidance from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself. With a heart full of remorse, he traveled to the city where the Prophet resided, hoping for some words of wisdom or perhaps a chance for redemption. When he finally reached the Prophet, he fell to his knees and confessed his wrongdoings.

"Ya Rasulullah, I have lived a life of sin. I am filled with regret and seek your guidance. Can Allah forgive me?" Tariq pleaded, tears streaming down his face.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) looked at Tariq with compassion but delivered a somber reply. "Allah's mercy is vast, but you must also understand that His justice is firm. It is not for me to say if your repentance will be

accepted or not. Only Allah knows."

Feeling desolate and hopeless, Tariq left the Prophet's presence. Overwhelmed by his sorrow and the perceived finality of his fate, he retreated to a secluded cave outside the village. For weeks, he lived in the cave, crying day and night, lamenting his past actions and pleading with Allah for forgiveness.

His cries echoed through the barren landscape, and his isolation deepened his sense of regret. Yet, in the midst of his despair, Tariq never lost hope in Allah's mercy. He clung to the belief that despite his past, Allah's compassion might still reach him.

One night, as Tariq sat in his cave, a profound silence enveloped him. Suddenly, the angel Jibra'il (Gabriel) appeared before him, radiating divine light. Tariq was initially awestruck and overwhelmed, but he listened intently as Jibra'il spoke.

"Allah has heard your cries and seen your sincerity. He has granted you forgiveness due to your genuine repentance and unrelenting hope in His mercy. Allah's mercy surpasses all understanding, and He is always ready to forgive those who sincerely turn to Him."

Tariq's heart leaped with relief and gratitude. He felt a profound sense of peace wash over him as he realized that despite his past, Allah had granted him a chance for redemption. He returned to the village with a renewed spirit, determined to live a life of righteousness and devotion.

The story of Tariq serves as a powerful reminder that no matter how grave one's past may be, Allah's mercy is boundless. True repentance and

hope in Allah's forgiveness can lead to a fresh start, demonstrating the profound compassion and justice of the Almighty.

These and many other stories give one lesson: Allah's mercy is limitless and beyond the capacity of our narrow-mindedness. Our limited mind cannot measure how much He loves us and is compassionate towards us. Thus, we should never lose hope in Allah's mercy. Since the doors of forgiveness are always open, we should not give up hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy far outweighs our sins.

With our sincere atonement, if Allah wills, He shall forgive us all and shower us with His grace. The stories of Tariq, among others who sought repentance, have simply spoken toward this great reality of the nature of Allah: that His mercy and love are immeasurable. Reminding the followers that, no matter how much one has fallen, the gate of redemption is always open for the one who turns to repentance and seeks His forgiveness with all their heart.

Allah's mercy is like an unlimited sea, covering each and every aspect of our lives. He knows not only our sins but even the tricks of our hearts. He simply turns to us when we turn towards him in repentance with firm hopes in his compassion and grace. All these stories prove very aptly that Allah's love does not stop at the point of some of our past wrongdoings. His love is eternally urging us to turn toward Him, no matter how many times we fall. It isn't just some

promise of forgiveness but an actuality within our lives lifted from despair—the light shown forth upon our path, leading unto righteousness and peace.

In every moment of regret, in every tear of repentance, Allah's mercy is there, present, ready to enfold us, to guide us onto the right way. The catch lies in our sincerity and persistence toward getting forgiven, for which we trust in His mercy, which knows no bound.

Chapter TEN

Infinite Blessings

Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?

The most merciful rab loves nothing more than He loves His creation. I want to highlight his mercy through Surah Ar-Rahman since this is my most favorite Surah of the whole Holy Quran. While reading this Surah, one comes to know how Allah showers his love on His 'Makhlooq'; how He has made everything 'Ashraf ul Makhlooqat'-humanity, subordinate to human beings and has prepared such a wonderful paradise for humans. This Surah Ar-Rahman is known for repeatedly referring to Allah's blessings and favors. Every ayah mentions different aspects of his mercy and generosity, which emphasizes abundant blessings upon humankind. Hence, here is the summary of each verse and mentioning Allah's blessings upon us.

"The Most Merciful"

The chapter starts by emphasizing Allah's overarching attribute of mercy and compassion towards all creation.

"Taught the Quran"

Allah's blessing of providing guidance through the Quran, a comprehensive source of knowledge and wisdom.

"Created man"

The creation of human beings, highlighting the fundamental blessing of life itself.

"Taught him eloquence"

Allah's gift of language and the ability to communicate effectively, which is crucial for human interaction and learning.

"The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation"

The orderly movement of celestial bodies, reflecting Allah's precision and the stability of natural laws.

"And the stars and the trees prostrate"

The obedience of celestial and natural elements to Allah's will, illustrating His power over the universe.

"And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance"

Allah's creation of the sky and the establishment of balance and order in the universe, ensuring harmony.

"That you not transgress within the balance"

The guidance to maintain balance and justice in all aspects of life.

"And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance"

The importance of justice and fairness in human dealings, as ordained by Allah.

"And the earth He laid out for the creatures"

The provision of a habitable environment for all living beings, including humans, animals, and plants.

"Therein is fruit and palm trees having sheaths"

The abundance of fruits and resources provided

for sustenance and enjoyment.

"And grain having husks and fragrant flowers"

The diversity of food sources, including grains and flowers, enhancing nourishment and beauty.

"So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?"

A rhetorical question reminding mankind to recognize and appreciate the numerous blessings of Allah.

"He created man from clay like [that of] pottery"

The creation of human beings from clay, a symbol of Allah's creative power and craftsmanship.

"And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire"

The creation of jinn from fire, highlighting the diversity of creation.

"So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?"

Repeats the reminder to be grateful for the blessings of creation and existence

"Lord of the two sunrises and Lord of the two sunsets"

Allah's control over the cycles of day and night, reflecting His dominion and the natural order.

"Between them is a boundary never to be passed"

The establishment of boundaries and limits, maintaining order and balance in nature.

"He sends down from the sky, rain"

The provision of rain, essential for the growth of plants and replenishment of water sources.

"In it are the blessings and sustenance for mankind"

The rain brings fertility to the earth, supporting agriculture and providing sustenance.

"The Creator of mankind and jinn"

Acknowledges Allah's role as the Creator of all beings, reinforcing His authority and generosity.

"The One who created the heavens and the earth"

Highlights the creation of the universe, a fundamental blessing that supports life and existence.

"And the ship upon which you ride"

The blessing of transportation and travel, which facilitates exploration and trade.

"And the mountains and the land, all of it is subdued for you"

The subjugation of natural elements for human benefit, including mountains and land for habitation and cultivation.

"And the earth He spread out and placed therein firmly set mountains"

The stability of the earth, with mountains providing support and balance.

"And He made the earth easy for you to travel upon

The ease of traveling and moving across the earth, facilitating human activity and commerce.

"And the earth He has spread out for you, and in it are mountains and rivers"

The diverse and hospitable features of the earth, including mountains and rivers that support life.

"And He made the sun and the moon, and the stars in subjection"

The regulation of celestial bodies for the benefit of life on Earth, including timekeeping and navigation.

"And He has provided you with all the things

you need"

Allah's provision of all necessary resources for human survival and prosperity.

"The Creator of the heavens and the earth, who guides them in their purpose"

Allah's guidance of all creation in fulfilling its purpose, maintaining order and harmony.

"And He made the night and the day follow each other"

The regular cycle of night and day, which supports biological rhythms and daily life.

"And He made the earth full of blessing and plenty"

The abundance of resources and opportunities provided by Allah on Earth.

"And He made the heavens as a canopy, and the earth as a place to settle"

The protective atmosphere and habitable surface of the Earth, crucial for sustaining life.

"And He made the sun a light and the moon a reflector"

The different roles of celestial bodies in providing light and guiding human activities.

"And He made the rain descend from the sky"

The cycle of rain that nurtures the earth, allowing plants and life to thrive.

"And He made the mountains as pegs"

Mountains stabilize the earth's crust and provide support for the land.

"And He made the oceans and rivers"

The provision of water bodies that support life, agriculture, and transportation.

"And He made the sun and moon in precise orbits"

The precise movement of celestial bodies that maintains order in the universe.

"And He made the sky as a protective shield"

The atmosphere protects life on Earth from harmful solar radiation and space debris.

"And He made the earth as a place of provision and benefit"

The Earth's resources and ecosystems provide everything needed for life.

"And He made the creation in its perfect form"

The perfection and intricacy of creation reflect Allah's wisdom and power.

"And He made the creation with precision and balance"

The balance and harmony in creation, ensuring stability and functionality.

"And He made the creation with purpose and intention"

The purposeful design of all things, reflecting Allah's deliberate and thoughtful creation.

"And He made the earth a place of abundance and blessing"

The Earth's bounty and richness, providing ample resources for all living beings.

"And He made the earth's surface fertile and productive"

The fertility of the soil, essential for agriculture and sustaining life.

"And He made the stars for guidance"

The stars provide guidance for navigation and timekeeping.

"And He made the sun and moon for measurement and calculation"

The celestial bodies help in measuring time and organizing human activities.

"And He made the earth a source of sustenance and comfort"

The Earth provides everything needed for survival and comfort.

"And He made the creation with care and detail"

The meticulous creation of the universe, reflecting Allah's attention to detail.

"And He made the earth a place of peace and prosperity"

The Earth's environment supports a life of peace and prosperity.

This is the most beautiful Surah of the Holy Quran, which very concisely explains the great amount of Allah's blessings and boundless love shown to humanity. It first of all elaborates the role of Allah, who is Most Merciful, who created the heavens and the earth. It counts how often Allah reminds us about the number of bounties that He has been bestowing upon us since the day one, starting from the sun and the moon down to the setting up of the natural phenomenology, its regulation, and showering the earth with all of its bounties. Every verse points to a different aspect of His generosity, from the gifts of nourishment and natural resources to the intricate balance in the universe. It reminds one of Allah's deep love and care for creation, urging that He be recognized and appreciated for His countless favors. Only a beloved and merciful rab can bestow such abundant blessings upon their beloved.

Similarly, the way the sun makes this world livable, and how rain and sunlight enable us to cultivate farming lands, are blessings bestowed upon us by Allah. The nights, winds, and other

natural phenomena are also among the blessings from Allah. Allah is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and everything in between.

Among His countless blessings is the sun, a celestial body of immense significance. We praise Allah, the Almighty, for His wisdom and mercy in creating the sun, which illuminates our world and sustains life on Earth.

Allah says in the Quran:

“It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each floating in its orbit.”

(Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:33)

Through the sun, Allah bestows upon us the bounty of crops and fruits, which sustain our lives and nourish our bodies. The sun's energy facilitates the growth of grains, vegetables, and fruits, ensuring that we have the sustenance required for our health and well-being.

The warmth of the sun also influences the weather, enabling the water cycle that brings rain and replenishes our resources. By this, Allah provides us with clean water, essential for drinking, irrigation, and various needs.

We are reminded in the Quran of Allah's blessings:

“And He is the One who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, until, when they have carried a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead land and give life

**thereby to the earth after its lifelessness.
Thus will be the resurrection.”
(Surah Al-A'raf, 7:57)**

Moreover, the sun's position and its changing seasons offer us a variety of climates and ecosystems, enriching our lives with diverse experiences and resources. Allah's creation is perfect, and every aspect, including the sun, is a testament to His grandeur and benevolence.

We express our gratitude to Allah for the sun and its role in providing light, warmth, and sustenance. We recognize that every blessing, from the smallest grain to the grandest sunrise, is a sign of His mercy and grace. Indeed, Allah is the Most Generous, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah for His infinite wisdom and the countless blessings He bestows upon us every day.

“And He is the Subjugator of the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.” (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:5)

The most merciful Lord, Allah, has loved His creation more than anything in this universe. I want to present His mercy by means of focusing on Surah Rahman, according to me the most lovely surah in the Holy Quran. A glance of this surah elaborates so much about how much Allah our Lord loves us human beings by

making everything humble for us and the arranging beautiful paradise for us. This Surah is known for repeating mention of Allah's blessing and favors. Every verse focuses on a different aspect of His mercy and generosity, showing the abundant blessings that He has showered upon mankind.

Imagine a world where the sun doesn't rise. The first thing that would result from this is a permanent state of darkness—the sun illuminates the Earth. Without it, the planet will develop an eternal night.

Besides, temperatures will start to decrease rapidly. Sunlight is in itself important for heating Earth, so without it, global temperatures might start descending to make an ice age scenario. It is in only a few weeks that the temperatures slide well below zero, and surface water and land are frozen comprehensively.

Photosynthesis, by which plants derive energy from sunlight, would cease. While this would cause the collapse of plant life, thus upsetting food chains and consequently the natural order of things, it would mean for animals that derive their food from plants, they would therefore starve. After all, plants also play a major role in oxygen, which is in the air. Without the sunlight, the crops would not grow, and agriculture would come to a halt with consequences of famine, and shortages of many basic elements of food.

Not to forget the **deficiency in vitamin D** and other health-related problems related to sunlight. The tremendous coldness would be harmful, if not mortal, to human beings. every ayat and its mention of Allah's blessings upon

us:

Imagine for a while if **rain disappears**, the main source of freshwater will be lost. This will lead to very huge droughts that will have a negative impact on the river, lake, and the underground water tables. The water shortage will affect the drinking water, agricultural, and industrial use. Rain is used in raising crops. Lack of rain would wreak havoc in crops, with consequential food shortage and famine. This would severely disrupt agriculture and lead to a collapse of the chain of food supply.

Several ecosystems borrow the determination of their existence from the periodic rainfalls. Lack of the rain would see the drying up of wetlands, rivers, and lakes, which pools doom for several plant and animal species that make a habitat in those ecosystems.

Areas that are already arid would become further desertified. Deserts will spread further and faster, reducing areas that could have been habitable, or under cultivation.

Therefore, the **ozone layer** acts as an absorptive barrier that mostly blocks **harmful UV radiation**. Without it, the increased amount of UV radiation on Earth's surface would cause about ten times more cases of skin cancer, cataracts, and other health problems.

Increased UV radiation would kill plants, including crops and phytoplankton in the ocean. These are the bases not only of the marine food chain but also a very large fraction of the oxygen production on Earth. Destroying them would, therefore, disrupt whole ecosystems and sources of food.

Ozone layer regulate the Earth's climate. The

depletion of the ozone layer would therefore, cause misbalances in climate, such that weather changes, which could even contribute to global warming.

Enhanced UV radiation due to will harm crops, leading to reduced agricultural productivity. This in turn, will cause food shortage, quite a precarious scenario.

The increase in UV radiation can have a deadly effect on aquatic life, most specifically the organisms such as planktons forming the base of the food chain in oceans, thus disrupting the whole marine ecosystem and eventually impacting fisheries. Indeed, increased UV levels will speed up wear and/or the degradation effects on materials such as plastics and building materials, causing an increase in the wear and tear on infrastructures and products.

Let's imagine if soil cannot grow what is going to happen. Soil is used to grow many crops. If, one day, it could not support crop growth, it would create food shortages of immense proportions. Such staple crops as wheat, rice, and corn would no longer be producible, culminating in a global food crisis.

Agriculture is a big sector of the economy. The failure to grow crops would have a devastating blow on economies reliant on farming. There would be massive unemployment, financial instability, and eventual economy run-down in areas that have been self-sustaining through agriculture.

Failure of crops translates into hunger and malnutrition. People cannot experience the problems of having no food to eat effectively.

Food shortages can lead to social upheaval and

political destabilization. The competition for resource availability and a line of food supply may result in conflicts and questions to governance.

Most of the livestock animals depend on crops as a source of food. Failure in growing crops would thus affect animal husbandry and lead to an insufficient supply of meat, dairy, and other animal products.

Soil degradation and loss of agricultural productivity may lead to increased desertification and erosion. This will further reduce the land available for farming and worsen environmental conditions.

We cannot ever forget the love of Allah when we reflect on those favors which He has showered upon us. As Allah says in the Holy Quran, "Then which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?" Indeed, we cannot refuse a single favor of Allah showered upon us. May we never be unaware of His favors but continue to dwell amidst a life of thankfulness and reverence against His great creations.

As Allah says in Holy Quran;

"And how many a moving (living) creature there is that does not bear its provision (food)! Allah provides for it and for you. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." Surah Al-Ankabut (29:60)

Surely, Allah's favors on us are too numerous to count. Health was granted by Allah so that we

may all enjoy active lives. Day-by-day bread provided our needs with food to eat and sustain bodies that will stay healthy. And the roofs over our heads protect us from the elements and give comfort and security. Just these three simplistic blessings of health, food, and shelter show a tiny example of Allah's great favor upon us. These are gifts that bring into our consciousness the immeasurable love and compassion of God, to live in thanksgiving, and to share these very blessings with others. May we be included among those who are always thankful to Allah, acknowledging and being grateful for His favors and love. A thankful servant of Allah, recognizing his bounties upon him, is a person dear to Allah. In being thankful and grateful at all times, we set ourselves in line with His divine will and continue earning His love and mercy.

Chapter ELEVEN

The Divine Design of Hardships

“Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear...” Surah Al-Baqarah (2:286)

Throughout my twenty-one years of life, I have met many people who believe that Allah puts only sorrow and suffering in their lives. What they forget is the more important part: Allah tests those whom He loves. They keep asking themselves questions like, "Why do I have so many problems? Maybe I am being tested beyond my potential." What they forget is the more important part: Allah tests those whom He loves. These tests are not for nothing; they make us grow, and finally, they take us to accomplishments and victories. Their lives may be considered a deep observation of this. Every prophet suffered much in his trials and was hard-pressed by his nation, which constantly doubted his genuineness, asking them why they did not live in ease if they were really the beloved of Allah. These trials were, however, not indications of Allah's wrath but signs of His deeper love and a chance for the prophets to show their perseverance and trust. There is a saying of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that states, "The beloved of Allah are tested with difficulties." This message thus hits at the grassroots of this essential truth: success often follows hardship. Just as we learn to stand by

repeated falls, so too must we recognize that trials and tribulations are essential for achieving our goals and emerging stronger.

I will pick up on this chapter, still using the same hadith but with illustrations from everyday life to show how undergoing and overcoming adversity could be a way for the deep growth and success of the individual.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"When Allah loves a servant, He tests him."
(Sunan al-Tirmidhi 2396)

There is a Sahih Hadith of the Holy Prophet that: Allah tests only those of His servants whom He loves. So that to realize the meaning of the Hadith, you just compare life as it goes to two people living during the same period—one of them leads his life in comfort and the other is to pass through crucial tests and trials.

We can first explore the person who has no crises from the womb to the tomb. A life completely free from trials can almost certainly become uncaring and feeble of character. In the absence of challenges, a person may not appreciate the situations of the poor, the orphan, and the destitute. Enormous capacity for feeling and strong emotional constitution come as a result of more struggle and personal suffering.

On the contrary, consider a person who is forever at loggerheads with adversities—hardly making ends meet, embattled with challenging

odds, tested for his very survival against all odds. This person develops a vast scope of other people's miseries from experience, the tenacity of which instills in him a vital quality of empathy but also toughens. The struggles only inspire them, though, to do great things and contribute a lot to society.

Hardships may be challenging, but often they become hidden blessings in their own right. They help us grow out of our comfort zones and realize new aspects of ourselves. Patience, fortitude, and empathy are developed in the fire of trials, and so adversity becomes one of our chief sources of strength. So very easily do such experiences test our faith, thereby unfolding before us different dimensions of our character and capacities which one perhaps would never have comprehended otherwise. They eventually make us flexible and strong-bound to our purpose, with enriched lives. The fact is that the trials which come are not actually hindrances; rather, it's an opportunity for a person to bloom in prolific personal and spiritual growth.

The ones who were put to tests and trials but had enormous success included Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him; Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him; Nelson Mandela; J.K. Rowling; Thomas Edison; Nikola Tesla; and Colonel Harland Sanders, the founder of KFC. From betrayal, to being enslaved, and reaching the later stage of imprisonment, Prophet Yusuf rose as an advisor to the king of Egypt and saved the country from famine. Equally, Prophet Muhammad was also greatly persecuted and

rejected, while his works were put in great hindrance of preaching the message of Islam; yet he managed to bring together the whole Arab Peninsula under the banner of Islam, hence laying a wide legacy. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years for his anti-apartheid struggle but emerged to be the first black president of South Africa and knocked out apartheid in the country through reconciliation. As for J.K. Rowling, she had to hold on for some time being in poverty, fighting against depression and in the face of rejection before she managed to write the globally successful Harry Potter series. Thomas Edison underwent perhaps thousands of failures before he could eventually invent the practical light bulb, which actually revolutionized modern life. Despite constant setbacks, financial problems, and numerous failures throughout his life, Nikola Tesla never stopped contributing potent innovations in electrical engineering, which are still shaping today's technology. Colonel Harland Sanders

founded KFC when he was in the 60s, after facing repeated failures and rejections, turning it into one of the greatest fast-food chains in the world. Such personalities show that things done with patience, bearing, and belief can sometimes result in miracles.

If they had been born into sumptuous premises, and had never gone through the tests and hardships that made them, well then perhaps they would not have eventually become such great leaders. The struggles of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) and the slurs of life were the troubles overcome by Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him). The restriction of greatness never stopped Nelson Mandela, the standing of shame over J.K. Rowling, the persistence of Thomas Edison, the determination of Nikola Tesla, and never-give-up attitude of Colonel Harland Sanders—all imprinted with frustrating imitation events that set steel in their determination, resilience, and vision. The betrayals and imprisonments of Prophet Yusuf, the persecution and rejection of the Prophet Muhammad, Mandela's 27 years in prison, the poverty and rejection of J.K. Rowling, countless failures of Edison, financial failures of Tesla, and a myriad of repeated setbacks of Sanders all worked in junctures that refined this power and resolve. Adversity was not something that happened to them, but something that they went through—others who were getting ready to bear forth an empathic, tenacious, and wise generation to lead, innovate, and inspire. Had they lived lives of ease without these trials, they might never have developed the resiliency and depth of character that led to extraordinary achievements in the end.

Allah desires success for His beloved servants in their lives, and more often than not, that success comes by way of trials and hardships. Now, all these are not arbitrary; rather, they are a kind of training from Allah so that He may prepare His servant for greater things to come.

Take the case of athletes, for example. Coaches put them through rigorous exercises and situations before they actually undergo real competitions. This is necessary to prepare them

to face the pressures and challenges of real events. Similarly, Allah puts us through trials and trials to prepare us for the great things we achieve in our lives. We, too, are strengthened and tempered through experiences in the crucible of suffering in the same way an athlete develops his potential and power. Not as hindrances do these trials come aplenty, but they are an opportunity for growth and preparation; to wrestle with adversities yet to come and ultimately become the purpose.

In another narration:

"The people who are tested the most severely are the Prophets, then the righteous, then those below them, and then those below them. A man is tested according to his level of faith. If his faith is firm, his test is increased. If his faith is weak, his test is lightened."

(Sunan Ibn Majah 4023)

The traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him provide ample insight into the nature of divine tests. It is mentioned in one such Hadith that Allah distributes His test in a hierarchical manner, for example, the highest level of tests are given to prophets, then righteous people, and then others. This clearly points out an underlying beautiful principle: the intensity of one's tests is in line with the strength of his faith.

The Prophet related that trials are commensurate with one's level of faith—the stronger the faith, the greater the test; the weaker the faith, the lighter the test. This hadith makes it quite clear that Allah's purpose for the trials is the strengthening of His slave by their adjustments according to his faith.

If you are to meet very serious adversities and the strongest trials, consider it a merit for your true faith and an indication of your being among Allah's genuine, true believers. It is the reason and preparation from God for greater successes and spiritual growth.
For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah:

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient."
(Quran 2:155)

This Ayah highlights the fact that trials and testing are elements of life in this world, characteristic of those whom Allah loves, intended to serve as purification, strengthening, and uplifting.

Allah says in surah Ankaboot:
"And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good."

The meaning of the verse is that whoever struggles and passes through ordeals in the way of Allah, Almighty and Sublime, will find his or her way to His pathways and reward. Islamic history abounds with important examples of people who under-went great hardships, interpreted servile submission by the accepted ones and was a way of raising their status. A few examples include:

Prophet Mohammad peace be upon Him:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) faced a lot of adversity and suffering in life. He was born an orphan, was harassed and tormented by his own tribe, and death threats were circulated to kill him. In the early period of Islam, he and his companions were boycotted, starved, and tortured. The Prophet also lost his wife, Khadijah, and uncle Abu Talib in the same year, which is known as the "Year of Sorrow." His sufferings were indeed nothing but Allah's love, as it fortified his personality, developed his dependence upon Allah, and also prepared him for the grueling challenges in leading the ummah. And his patience and perseverance shall be made an example for believers always. Similarly, after the loss of wife Khadija and uncle Abu Talib, and with the injuries in Tai'f, God called the prophet to Miraj to reward him for all his patience with many things.

Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him):

Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him) is the epitome of patience in unbearable tests. It is right, for he possessed immense wealth, a large family, and physical health. Then Allah tried him by depriving him of his wealth, killing his children, and finally putting him through years of agonizing diseases that terrify most people.

Allah gave him back his good health, his money, and another family being granted to him. His is a very powerful reminder of how trials at times are a sign of love from Allah to purify and uplift his servants onto a higher level.

Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him):

Prophet Ibrahim had to face many tests in his lifetime. First of all, his people threw him into a fiercely burning fire because he refused to believe in their faith of idols and broke their gods, then Allah ordered him to sacrifice his son, Ismail. In spite of all the enormity of tests on him, Ibrahim did not lose faith in Allah.

Via the favor of Allah, the fire became cool for Ibrahim, and he was about to slaughter his son when Allah sent a ram to replace it, to be slaughtered, thus rewarding Ibrahim's absolute submission to His will. These were all tests from Allah, out of his love, to increase the status of Ibrahim as the "Khalilullah" and also as eternal examples of faith and perseverance. Allah called Ibrahim his beloved friend in Quran even only Prophet lut accepted his divine message but instead of that Allah loves Ibrahim he was trusty

friend and endured hardships in his life.

Prophet Musa(peace be upon him):

The trials of Prophet Musa ranged from the time he was put inside a basket and dispatched through the river in his babyhood to the death escape from Egypt, which resulted from killing a man in defense, leading the Children of Israil out of slavery, and spending 40 years wandering in the desert.

Each ordeal in his life serves to reinforce him as a leader, follow with patience, and depend on Allah. It was the plan of Allah to make him one of the most great Messengers by confronting Pharaoh, dealing as a leader with his people, and patiently guiding them through the wanderings across the desert. In so doing, Allah showed His love for Musa by guiding him, providing him with miracles, and finally bringing deliverance to his people.

Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (Peace Be Upon Them):

After the father, Imam Ali, Imam Hassan, and Imam Hussain, the grandsons of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, had to go all through sorts of hardships. Imam Hassan was poisoned, and his life was a tale of political turmoil and betrayals. Imam Hussain faced the final test at the Battle of Karbala, in which he was brutally martyrdom along with a few of his friends at the hands of the forces of Yazid.

Hazrat Imam Hassan and Hazrat Imam Hussain's trials stood for Allah's love; their

sacrifices symbolized the cause in humanity to struggle for truth, justice, and the precincts of righteousness.

Whatever that may be, for posterity, the stand taken by Imam Hussain at Karbala serves to remind them about the upholding of justice and the resistance against tyranny, even if it came to mean one's life. Their patience against unimaginable adversities has handed many lessons onto generations of Muslims, to stand firm in faith and on principle.

Prophet Yusuf (Peace Be Upon Him):

Prophet Yusuf was betrayed by his brothers, cast into a well, and sold into slavery. He had to undergo the ordeal of false accusation against good conduct and was sentenced to a large number of years in prison, though he was innocent.

Throughout all this, Yusuf never lost faith in Allah and his own integrity. Allah loved him through his trials because those were the means for his exaltation to power in Egypt, whereby he saved many people, including his own family, from famine.

An empowering example is that of Yusuf, who went through hard times with patience and faith in the divine scheme, leading to great compensation. If Yusuf had not experienced downs, he could not have become King of Egypt with his full leadership role. From these stories, the tests, and trials experienced by Prophet Muhammad, Imam Hassan, Imam Hussain, and Prophet Yusuf were not just trials but were a manifestation of Allah's love towards them. They

were opportunities for increased spirituality, cleansing, and growth in faith. Their stories at the same time, equally make the followers realize and perceive the fact that their "living tests", the hardships and sufferings that they experience while acting in the path of Allah and His righteousness make them better people, earn them a higher place in this life, as well as in the afterlife.

Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him):

Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him) was tried by many afflictions/challenges, mainly those which concerned his beloved son, Yusuf. He had twelve sons, but Yusuf was the apple of his eye.

And among his other sons, envy mounted, and they conspired against Yusuf, sold him away as a slave, and then falsely told Yaqub that Yusuf was killed by a wild animal.

Yaqub was so stricken by the loss that he spent years weeping over Yusuf, and his grief was deep that his eyesight eventually became blind. His faith was well-paid off when Yusuf, who had reached the exalted position of power in Egypt, came back to him. The revival brought untold happiness to Yaqub, and his vision returned. The lesson from it is indeed the fact that it is Allah who tests and further then, He also gives respite and gives reward and consolation of the steadfastness in faith for all those who are His beloveds.

Prophet Isa (peace be upon him):

Prophet Isa was miraculously born to Maryam; since then, he has been put to many trials by the people around him.

He did many miracles by the permission of Allah, such as giving sight back to the blind, healing the leprous, and raising people from death, but yet most of them denied him and incited against him.

The greatest test was when his enemies plotted and resolved to crucify him. Allah saved Isa from that fate by calling him up to heaven and cast the features of another upon him as Isa, and that other was the one crucified. That Allah did not leave him to die in shame but raised him to the very highest place in heaven is just one more way that proves to a believer that no matter how great the trial, Allah is indeed love and mercy.

Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him):

Prophet Zakariya went through many tests and distress in life, mainly associated with him wanting a child. Zakariya was an upright man and used to pray to Allah a lot, but for many years he could not have a child with his wife as she was also well on in years. Thus Zakariya was very sorrowful for he thought that after his death, no one would be left to guide his nation according to the teachings of Allah.

He was granted a son, Yahya, who was to become a noble prophet. The gift of the miraculous son during his old age was already a phenomenon of great love and power, a proof that with Allah, nothing is impossible. This account of Zakariya is one of patience, persistence in prayer, and trust in the timing of Allah.

Maryam

Maryam (peace be upon her) is in the rank of the most exalted women of all the Islamic tradition

for she possessed piety, devotion, and purity. She was tested with a great trial by Allah's great decree to her when Angel Jibril approached her and announced that she was to have a son, Isa, without the touch of any man. That was indeed a tremendous trial to Maryam as she knew it was going to make her subjected to defamation and a part of the false accusations of her people.

And with whatever might she had, she eventually sustained the trial, depending totally on the assistance that came from Allah. She was defended by Allah in the accusation that people leveled against her, and his sustenance and well-being were also catered for when she gave birth to Isa. Allah permitted Isa, in a miraculous power, although a just-born baby, to testify his prophethood and testify for her as a chaste woman in her favor. This miraculous help was evidence of his care and love toward Maryam and the status to which Maryam was considered and behind action for wisdom.

This deep principle regarding the nature of divine tests is emphasized in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. In that regard, prophets stand first in the hierarchy of those tested, followed very closely by righteous believers. That means that those who go through the most important hardships are in excellent company, for it is actually an indication of Allah's love and favor.

If you are facing tribulations, comfort yourself by thinking that your tribulations are a sign that you are one of Allah's beloved ones. What can give the believer peace of heart and the strength to bear or endure is the fact that Allah, in His infinite wisdom, tests only to the level of faith

and capacity of the person.

Also remember that Allah lays no burden on a soul beyond what it can bear. This is stated in the Holy Quran:

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear." (Quran 2:286)

If someone is going through hardships, he must keep in his mind that Allah does not put a burden on a soul beyond its capacity. In fact, a lot of hardship is an indication and sign of strong faith, and one is considered to be among the choice servants of Allah. May Allah give us the grace to tolerate them with patience and thank Allah in every matter. Ameen.

Before expanding on this chapter, I would like to explore the impact of hardships from the perspectives of biology, sociology, and neuroscience.

Prefrontal Cortex: It is involved in decision-making, regulating feelings, and executive functions. So, in the control and management of stress and adversity, it has a very critical role. Exposure to challenging experiences could enhance the activity and connectivity of this region of the brain by enhancing its functions, which improve emotional regulation and cognitive control.

Amygdala and Stress Processing: The experiences of stress may modify the amygdala, a structure in the brain handling emotions.

Repeated exposure to stress and their successful management entails modulation of the amygdala's response to stress and resulting enhancement in Emotional Resilience.

Resilience Theory: Adversity makes one resilient, which in psychology is the ability to rapidly regain balance or poise after adversities. For that matter, adversity strengthens both problem-solving and coping mechanisms as it improves emotional strength. The theory of resilience suggests that individuals who face and survive their adversities develop greater psychological resilience and hardness.

Bandura's Theory: Albert Bandura developed the concept of self-efficacy, which incorporates the person's belief or confidence in being able to cope with situations and achieve success. Successful trials increase self-efficacy and thus people's confidence in being able to successfully master any future obstacles. It is this increase in confidence that will motivate further growth and success.

Stress and Adaptation: Biologically, more moderate levels of stress can stimulate the production of an adaptive response. The stress response from the endocrine system and release of such hormones as cortisol prepares humans for action to meet their challenge. Over time, this physiologically changes the subject in a manner that can help him or her cope with future stressors.

Neuroplasticity: Neuroplasticity refers to the fact that the brain restructures itself through

the creation of new neural pathways. In the same way, adversity can enhance neuroplasticity by increasing the resilience of the brain towards dealing with a new set of experiences. Thus, it may further enhance emotional and cognitive resiliencies.

Neuroplasticity and Learning: Neuroscience research shows that the challenge enhances the brain's cognitive flexibility to adopt novel information and situations. This flexibility is supported by neuroplasticity and contributes to better problem-solving, adaptability, and learning.

Above all, it is clear that psychology, biology, and neuroscience have views indicating that some tests and trials increase personal growth and strength. Individuals respond to and benefit from challenges in the manner they do because of psychological resilience, biological adaptation, and neural changes that make them grow in emotional and cognitive strength. However, hardships and trials are part of life; these misfortunes can be looked upon as examinations from Allah to add to our character and make us much stronger. These challenges do not exist to stop one but serve as opportunities to make our faith in Him stronger. Stories of the prophets Ibrahim and Yusuf, **Avenues of the Quran (Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah 2:155-157), and Hadiths narrated in Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sunan Ibn Majah**, depict that patience and faith during hard times lead to eventual divine rewards and self-development. This is further supported by psychology, biology, and neuroscience, which define how in this world, grappling with life's challenges will teach

emotional resiliency, cognitive flexibility, and, overall, strength to a human being. These trials ultimately come as an expression of Allah's love to guide us toward higher spiritual and personal growth.

Chapter Eleven

Righteous Engagement

, "Show mercy to those on earth, and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you"
(Sunan Al-Tirmidhi).

This chapter comes to examine the increasing violence, increasing brutality, and oppression elsewhere hence the lack of compassion among people has become a common trend. Societies are witnessing an increase in mob violence, infanticide, honor killings, domestic violence against women, cases of pedophilia and child abuse, as well as brutal rape cases. All of this made me wonder: why are people turning every society into turmoil and unrest?.

This is the reason why Islam was sent, to spread peace and to create a world of harmonious living beings. But it seems that man is moving astray from that command, acting more like a beast than a peacemaker. The dreadful and extreme tendencies of some Muslims were quite alarming today, as their acts were not only distorting the real message of Islam but also fueling Islamophobia. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in this life is such a great example of putting peace above fighting and always interacts with the others in morality's way. Islam is not just for the Muslims; it is for the whole of mankind.

Allah loves His whole creation and does not allow any oppression on His land. I will shed light on the teachings of our Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him) and divine revelations on maintaining peace. Also, I will try to touch on incidents occurring in our societies, contradicting the teachings of our beloved Prophet and Islamic principles.

The arrival of Islam changed the world and gave guidance to humankind on peace and justice to be adhered to. Many Muslims of today completely forgot to follow and practice the teachings of the Prophet. Ummah's lack of reading culture affects the society. Most people follow blindly what the scholars say without re-evaluating the content of their teachings. Some scholars even spread radicalism and extremism hence becoming a breeding ground of terrorism. I would first dwell on the teachings of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and divine teachings of Islam which call for peace. I would thereafter touch on the incidents in our societies that go against these teachings, noting the particular concerns with changing moralities which are against those very teachings of the beloved Prophet and divine teachings of Islam.

For instance, in Surah Baqarah, Allah says,
"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:190)

There is an emphasis in that ayah by Allah to the principle of war being more defensive than offensive in aggression. On the other hand, Allah has ordered that one must fight with fighting and even then not cross the limits because "for verily, Allah likes not the transgressors". The

sentiments of the innocents are, however, being exploited by the radical scholars who make them transgressors at the very time when they should be acting on the principle of defensive action. IN another area Allah says,

And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption."

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:205)

What a nice religion do we have, **MashAllah!** So kind of our Lord, He even cares for animals and crops. **Wallahi**, He is the most compassionate and merciful toward His believers, as He is toward every creation of His—be it animals or plants. Allah doesn't like the trouble-makers and neither does He favor the spreaders of confusion and disturbance in His land.

Because of this, We prescribed to the children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless it be for murder or for wreaking corruption in the land, it is as though he slew all men. And whoever gives life to one, it is as if he gave life to all men.

This beautiful verse on its own speaks volumes about the sense of responsibility that one has towards others, not just for Muslims or believers but for all of mankind. The verse highlights that the killing of one innocent soul is as if a person has killed all of humanity and the person who saves one life is as if one has saved all of humanity. Allah does not approve of mischief,

corruption, infanticide, and killing innocent souls simply and solely because it is not His nature; it does not go down well with Him, for Allah is Love.

Equally, Surah Al-Anfal (8:61), mentions:

"But if the inclination to peace is there, then make peace with them [also] and rely on Allah. Surely only on Allah can you rely. He is the Hearer and the Knower."

This verse attaches importance to the need to maintain peace in the world at large. Verily, He loves those who deal with the pacification of mankind for the improvement of the conditions of human life.

In Surah Al-Hujurat (49:9-10), Allah commands:

"So if two factions from among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."

"The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers.

And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

Allāh's instruction here is crystal clear: if two factions of believers are in dispute, one must strive to reconcile them. If one is oppressive, then join forces with the oppressed until justice has been realized. Even then, Allah commands that we act with justice and reconcile. His mercy extends to ensuring fairness even after conflict has taken place.

Surah Al-Furqan (25:63) further elaborates:

"And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace."

This verse is very likely indicating for believers to walk gently on the earth easy and gently, and when faced with ignorance, respond with peace. This is a testament to good manners and humbleness when in contact. It is representative of how deep concern the Quran has on peace.

In Surah Al-Isra (17:33), Allah prohibits unjust killing:

"And do not kill the soul that God has forbidden, except justly. And whoever is slain unjustly - surely We have appointed to his state a power, but he has no license to exceed bounds in slaying. Surely he shall be helped."

Allah forbade killing except for a just cause and put a higher price on pardoning than on revenge. When killing is permitted, it has to be restricted by the quality of justice.

Finally, Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:8) reminds us:

"Allah does not forbid you from those who fight you not for religion and do not take you out of your homes that you deal kindly and equitably with them.

Indeed Allah loves those who act equitably."
Allah also encourages righteousness and justice towards those who do not oppose or harm us and preaches the same that good treatment and justice should be given to all without discriminating on their stand.

Indeed, from these teachings, we are awakened by how deeply this religion is knit in doctrine, morality, and good practice leading us closer to the fulfillment of justice and peace among others.

It is stated in Surah Al-Mumtahanah, verse 60:8, that nothing forbids Muslims from being kind and just to disbelievers who do not show hostility toward them. This verse encourages peaceful co-existence, which installs the fact that righteousness and justice have to be accorded to all irrespective of their religion, so long as they do not commit any acts of enmity or oppression. It further emphasizes that Allah loves those who deal justly; as such, in Islam,

much emphasis is put on fair treatment and compassion towards fellow humanity. The verse reminds the universal principles of justice and kindness, which wanted to emphasize harmonious relations between people of different faiths.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him serves as a great model in leading continuous peace, morality, and good character in all walks of life. His stories of life and hadiths are guides to spending a righteous life with dignity and working toward harmony and justice among people.

Treaty of Hudaybiyyah:

One of the best examples is the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. When his way to perform Umrah was blocked by the Quraysh tribe of Mecca, Prophet Muhammad opted for diplomacy rather than declaring war, even though he was the leader of a large and powerful growing Muslim community. Although the treaty was apparently against the Muslims at that time, it did ultimately lead to the peaceful spread of Islam and manifested his commitment to peace instead of conflict.

Conquest of Mecca:

When he entered Mecca with an army that had become powerful enough, he had a position to retaliate for all persecutions that the Muslims

were receiving. In contrast, he declared a general amnesty, forgiving all of his former enemies, and ensured peace. He is reported to have said, **"There is no blame on you today. May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy" (Quran 12:92).**

Prophet Muhammad had the most upright moral character both in his private and public life. He laid great emphasis on honesty, integrity, and justice in all matters. Indeed, even before prophethood, Prophet Muhammad was called **"Al-Amin" (The Trustworthy) and "As-Sadiq" (The Truthful)** by the people of Mecca. His reputation for honesty and integrity thus earned for him the trust of all, including his bitter enemies.

The Black Stone Incident:

While the Kaaba reconstruction work was in progress, differences exploded among Meccan tribes regarding who should place the Black Stone in its place. Prophet Muhammad, known to all for his fairness, came up with a solution to the problem that would satisfy everyone: laying the stone on a cloth and then having each tribe's leader raise it together, thereby showing both wisdom and adherence to fairness.

The personality of Prophet Muhammad was an epitome of the teachings of the Quran. He was one of the most soft-hearted, humble, and patient human beings to have walked on this earth and treated everybody with respect and

kindness.

The Prophet said, "The best of you are those who have the best manners and character" (Sahih Bukhari). He showed his compassion to children, elders, women, and even animals, thus adhering to his maxim.

The Woman Who Threw Garbage:

There was a woman who would throw garbage on the Prophet Muhammad every time he passed by her house. One day, he asked after her when she failed to throw the litter. Upon being told that she was ill, he went to offer his help to her, after which she realized his nobility and became a Muslim.

The teaching of Prophet Muhammad in the form of hadiths brings great messages into peace-keeping, morality, and character. "The believer is not the one who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry," says the Prophet, narrated by Sunan Ibn Majah. This hadith reflects how much social justice and harmony are important to create peace.

He also said, "**I have been sent to perfect good character**" (Al-Muwatta). His mission was not only to spread the message of Islam but also to refine the morals of society.

Another hadith states, "**Show mercy to those on earth, and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you**" (Sunan Al-Tirmidhi). This emphasizes the importance of compassion and kindness in all interactions.

Respect and Kindness to Women:

Prophet Muhammad stressed women's dignity

and respect at a time when women's rights were generally not considered important. One day, a lady named Khawlah bint Tha'labah came to the Prophet with her complaint. Her husband dealt very cruelly with her, so she wanted justice to be done. The Prophet therefore listened to her very patiently and answered with much compassion, ensuring everything that was hers was returned to her. His teachings stressed the need to treat women in an honorable and gracious manner:
"The best of you are those who are the best to their women."

Hajj al-Wida, or the Farewell Pilgrimage, was the last pilgrimage undertaken by the Prophet, peace be upon him, in 10 AH after the Hijra. It was during this pilgrimage that he gave his last public address to the Muslim community, a very powerful sermon known as the "Farewell Sermon." Khutbah al-Wida is one of the pillars of Islamic thought on which many norms with regard to life are based, including those regarding the fair treatment of women.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his Farewell Sermon underlined equality among people: nobody is superior to another but by piety and good deeds. Treating women the best has been spoken about in the specific words of the Prophet: **"O people, you have rights over your women, and your women have rights over you. Treat your women well and be kind to them.**

This teaching has emphasized mutual respect and gentleness between the husband and the wife.

Women's rights and dignity: The Holy Prophet

had emphasized women's inborn rights and dignity. He is reported to have said

"The best of you are those who are the best to their women."

This saying makes it clear that an individual is tested for his good-nature and piety according to how he treats his wife, his women-folk, or his wife and his women-folk.

Protection and Fair Dealing: He mentioned that women needed protection and fair treatment. He said:

"Fear Allah in respect to women. You have taken them on the security of Allah and have made their bodies lawful unto you by the words of Allah."

The saying is a reminder to men to protect and show respect for women as part of their covenant with Allah.

Gentleness and Mercy: The Messenger of Allah also spoke about being gentle and being merciful. He said:

"Indeed, women have been created from a rib, and the most curved part of the rib is the upper part. If you try to straighten it, you will break it; but if you leave it, it will remain curved. So, act kindly towards women."

As I reflect upon the teachings of our holy prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, I am highly perturbed by the state of affairs in our contemporary societies. Violence against women, son preference, cases of honor killings, and domestic abuse have become usual things. Many women are forced into marriages against their will and suffer serious psychological and physical damage. Some go to the extent of burying their daughters alive, a practice

reminiscent of the days before the guiding light of Islam.

Such violent acts of injustice are not only revolting but have brought a bad name to Islam all over the world. We must therefore turn back to the pure teachings of Islam and follow them in letter and spirit so that these evils may be eradicated.

Caring for the Poor:

The concern for the poor was deep and practical in the mind of Prophet Muhammad. He himself lived a simple life, sharing whatever little he had with the needy. His house, although poor, was always open to the poor, the destitute, and the homeless. During a famine, he used to personally go to visit the poor and distribute among them the little food available. He showed through his example that true richness is not in worldly wealth but in serving others and mitigating the sufferings of the distressed.

Protection and Maintenance for the Orphan:

It is reported that the Prophet was very considerate towards orphans. He himself tasted orphanhood, hence felt their difficulties. The Prophet recommended that his followers tend to orphans with much devotion. He is reported to have said, "**I and the one who looks after an orphan will be in Paradise like this,**" and he

joined his two fingers together to indicate this. His personal behavior served as an example in the art of being there for those who have become orphans.

Defense of the Oppressed:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace upon him) is one who would defend the oppressed, like slaves and those lower in rank. He used to defend their rights and work for their freedom. He taught equality and justice and stood against the social setting that at that time led to discrimination. A good example would be the relation of the Prophet with Bilal ibn Rabah, a former slave who would become one of his closest companions. Despite the ill treatment Bilal had faced, the Prophet accepted him as an equal, dignified him, and demonstrated that real value is characterized by faith and character, not social status.

The life of our beloved Prophet was full of moral excellence and compassion towards everybody—be it the poor, orphans, destitute, and even towards women. Sadly, the lack of reading culture amongst Muslims today makes many of them depend on scholars who sometimes ill-represent the tenets of Islam. Some scholars, especially in South Asia, are propagandists of

extremism and radicalism, which literally misinterprets the original concept of Islam.

In our modern times, we witness increasing cases of mob lynching in Pakistan on the pretext of blasphemy where an infuriated mob lynches the accused without any educated understanding or trustworthy proof. It surely is a horrific misinterpretation of the Islamic belief. Of course, as Sura An-Nur says:

"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and then do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and never accept their testimony thereafter. They are indeed the defiantly disobedient."

This verse shows that proof must be brought against the accused. If there is no proof, no one can have the right to kill or even harm another soul. Religious minorities should be protected and their respect safeguarded in an Islamic system of government.

Respect and Protection for Religious Minorities:

It should be entirely included in Islam that there is a freedom of religion and the right to exercise it. Here, the Holy Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256) gives the judgment:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong."

There have been historical precedents where religious minorities were granted protection and freedom during the Prophet Muhammad era. Two primary examples that exist to this very day about ensuring the rights and safety of non-Muslims in Islamic states include the Constitution of Medina and the Pact of Umar.

Other major concerns are the rising cases of child abuse and sexual violence. Sexual violence is not allowed in Islam; rather, it believes in mutual respect and consent in relationships. It says in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 2:228:

".And due to them [wives] is similar to that which is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But men have a degree over them. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

Sexual violence and exploitation have been consistently condemned by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Indeed, the prescribed penalties for these crimes in Islamic law are strict, showing that the very backbone of this legislation is the protection of the victim's dignity.

We Muslims need to introspect for our shortcomings and strive to inculcate the culture of learning and understanding. After all, how could we really follow Islam without a better

understanding of the life and teachings of our great Prophet Muhammad? The Holy Quran makes a strong case for being good citizens and citizens of your respective communities. Our communities should be role models of justice and mercy if we truly adhere to Islam's correct philosophy.

Let us work on filling our hearts with mercy and compassion, as Allah has shown us in every aspect of His guidance. The way of our Prophet helps to surmount corruption, domestic violence, honor killings of children, or other kinds of immoral practices if we work with the true teachings of Islam towards a better world for the coming generations.

Chapter Twelve

Forgiving and Patient Hearts

O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”

(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:153)

Mercy is an invigorating and potentially transforming force in Islam. Although it represents a divine attribute, it is also one of the deepest human virtues enjoined upon the faithful. It is not merely simple kindness but compassion, forgiveness, and understanding that go into one's approach to life. Through mercy, individuals can grow themselves to a very large extent, attain peace, and come closer to Allah. This chapter examines how the practice of practicing Rahmah develops other important Islamic virtues, including self-development. On a personal level, mercy enhances self-development and motivates inner satisfaction. In fact, the Quran states the concepts of sabr and forgiveness numerous times, showing clearly how significant they are in the Islamic framework. Sabr (patience) has occurred 90 times in different forms and contexts while Maghfirah— forgiveness— is basically mentioned 50 times in different forms and contexts.

Here, it will not be out of place to mention the Hadith of the Prophet in which he draws a vivid picture:

"The merciful are shown mercy by the Merciful. Be merciful on the earth, and you will be shown mercy from above."
Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1924

This hadith shows mercy to be a two-way street. That if one was merciful to others, he would get Allah's mercy. It shows mercy as an ethical principle that benefits both the giver and the receiver. This is what has been said by the ayah: Allah desires that His beloved servants should themselves be merciful to others, and He will reward such servants with His mercy. It is this way that the Almighty Allah shows His love for His creatures: "Show mercy on earth, you will be shown mercy from above". A person who undergoes mercy in his life by the eternal Rab will automatically see personal development through many ways.

By this way, forgiveness forms part of Rahmah. The life of our beloved Prophet shows how he practiced to forgive. He always forgave his enemies and people who troubled him in life. Therefore, here goes the Hadith of the Prophet himself:

He stated,
"Whoever does not show mercy to the people, Allah will not show mercy to him."
(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2319)

The Rahmah from Allah is connected with the Rahmah towards His creation. It is clear from the Hadith of the Prophet that the road towards Allah's mercy goes through the mercy shown to fellow human beings. Forgiveness is a basic path to being a merciful believer of Allah. Whosoever is annoyed with somebody and is unable to forgive that person will never ever show mercy to that person. Thus, forgiveness forms the initial step of mercy.

The major part of these Islamic Stories of Prophets includes incidents of Prophets opting for forgiveness instead of taking revenge. It is these merciful acts that not only elevate the lofty character of these personages but teach by example the lesson of forgiveness to the believers in general for establishment of a merciful and just society. Today, I'm going to begin by relating the story of Prophet Yusuf and his forgiving and merciful nature towards his brethren.

The Story of Prophet Yusuf and His Brothers

Probably one of the most known stories of forgiveness finds mention in the Qur'an in the story of Prophet Yusuf and his brothers. Driven by jealousy, Yusuf's brothers plotted against him. They threw him into a well, a fact that would lead to years of separation from his beloved father, Yaqub (AS), and numerous hardships including slavery and imprisonment.

After all these years, when Yusuf (AS) was in a high position in Egypt and his brothers came to him for food during the drought, Yusuf could easily take the ultimate revenge from them, knowing that they were his brothers. Yet what does he say when he makes himself known to them?

"There shall be no reproof against you this day. Allah forgive you. He is the most Merciful of the merciful."

Surah Yusuf, 12:92

The image of Yusuf forgiving when he had the power to take action against his brothers vividly depicts the attribute of mercy. At the point of Yusuf forgiving his brothers, his family reminisced about unity, and he had evidently proved that forgiveness has healing power to mend. This manifested that forgiveness is a characteristic of a strong person and not a weak one; it can be a source of profound personal and collective cure.

The Story of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Conquest of Mecca

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is replete with examples of the doctrine of forgiveness, but none is more powerful than the treatment he meted out to the people of Mecca after the conquest of the city. The Prophet and his followers had suffered years of persecution and exile at the hands of the Quraysh, the ruling tribe of Mecca. Yet, when the Muslims returned, victorious, the Prophet chose a path of mercy.

As the Prophet entered Mecca, he has the power of revenge from those who have been unjust to him. What he has requested from Meccan people was the following:

"What do you think I will do to you?"

The people replied, "You are a noble brother and the son of a noble brother." Then the Prophet has said,

"Go, for you are free."

This outstanding scene of forgiveness not only saved bloodshed but also endeared the hearts of many former enemies towards the Prophet. He had decided to show forgiveness that mercy is stronger than revenge. He has converted a hostile situation into one of reconciliation and peace, proving that forgiveness can effectively contribute toward lasting peace and unity.

Forgiving Hind bint Utbah

One of the examples of the Prophet's most in-depth forgiveness is his treatment of Hind bint Utbah. Hind bore a personal grudge against the Prophet because of her father, brother, and uncle who were controversially taken in the Battle of Badr. She hired the slave Wahshi, who in his best ability committed the gruesome act of killing Hamza, the Prophet's cherished uncle in the Battle of Uhud, and a decisive one too, as he mutilated his body and carried back the liver to Hind, who was very pleased and sucked it.

Hind, after the conquest of Mecca, feared for life due to her actions against Hamza. But when she came to the Prophet, ending her disbelief and accepting Islam, he completely forgave her: forgiving all of the acts of hostility she had presented to his uncle, offering himself to the

cause of Allah.

The Forgiveness of the People of Ta'if

The most testing phase of his Life Among the most trying times in the life of the Prophet (PBUH) was his journey to Ta'if. After his rejection by the people of Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) persisted by turning to the people of Ta'if to support his cause and faith in Islam. The people and leaders of Ta'if did not only reject the Prophet but also encouraged the town's children and slaves to throw stones on him, which hurt him physically. Bleeding and injured, the Prophet sought refuge in a garden. And that was the very moment when Jibreel came, offering to crush these people between the mountains for their cruel treatment. To this, the Prophet (PBUH) replied:

"No, I hope that Allah will bring forth from their descendants people who will worship Allah alone without associating anything with Him."

Even for the people of Ta'if, the response of the Prophet was also filled with mercy and foresight. He forgave them. His story speaks that forgiveness makes the possibility for the coming generations to find the truth and that sometimes the merciful method is more powerful than the tit-for-tat method.

Forgiving Abdullah ibn Ubayy

Abdullah ibn Ubayy was the head of the hypocrites in Medina. He caused lots of trouble to the Muslim community, spreading rumors

and separating them. One of his heinous crimes was spreading a fake rumor about Aisha (RA) who was the wife of the Prophet, that she committed adultery. This thing put the Prophet and his family in much trouble.

Although Abdullah ibn Ubayy was continuously treacherous, the Prophet (PBUH) never harmed him. Once this man died his earnest Muslim son asked the Prophet to offer prayer for his father. The Prophet promised to do so and, in addition to this, gave his own shirt to this man's son for his father's shroud .

Forgiving the Jewish Woman Who Poisoned Him

A Jewish lady gave poisoned meat to the Prophet (PBUH). She had mixed fatal poison in its lamb. She offered it to the Prophet. The Prophet tested the poisoned meat but at the first bite, felt the poison and stopped eating the meat. When she was presented before the Prophet and accepted her crime, she said that she wanted to test whether he was really a Prophet.

The Prophet did not command the punishment for the lady; rather, He excused her. His companions were all ready to retaliate, but the Prophet chose to forgive her and said that she performed these acts in ignorance and disbelief and not with personal hostility.

Forgiving Wahshi ibn Harb

Wahshi ibn Harb was the warrior who killed the prophet's dear uncle Hamza during the battle of

Uhud. When Mecca was conquered, Wahshi was already having a crisis of concern for his life on account of the killing. However, he summoned the courage to approach the Prophet and seek forgiveness.

In addition to the above act of confession, when Wahshi came to the Prophet, he asked for forgiveness and embraced Islam. Thus, the Prophet forgave him and said:

"Your acceptance of Islam erases the sin that you have committed before."

The Story of Prophet Musa (as) and Pharaoh's Sorcerers

These enormous difficulties focused around the fact that Prophet Musa had to struggle to pass on a message of monotheism against polytheism to Pharaoh and his people. Pharaoh, an arrogant tyrant, assumed the role of continuous resistance against Musa and considered the torturing of Musa and his followers his hobby. Upon seeing Prophet Musa, with the permission of Allah, indicating the truth of the shown miracles in several signs, the Pharaoh's magicians believed in the message of Musa and thus in Allah.

When the magicians believed, the strongest enemies as they belonged, they requested Allah for forgiveness and him for pardon on behalf of Musa. How did Prophet Musa deal with them? Not to criticize but pardon and embrace them. He brought them under the congregation of faith, hence providing a way that even those who stood in opposition to the truth could be forgiven upon their turning to Him.

Today, there is an issue of patience among people, and they can get aggressive. Especially, this is the thing that is common among the Gen Zs. But controlling the anger is the basics of Rahmah. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has showed compassion and coolness in every act of life. He never lost his head on anyone nor was he angry. His patience and teachings are an example for his ummah to always control anger and show good behavior with each other and mercy to all.

One story of this tells something and is therefore worth mentioning forth in our discussion into the present:

Once, a Jewish man visited the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and became his guest in his house. The unmatched hospitality of the Prophet gave a very warm reception to the guest and provided a place for sleeping.

This night, despitely, he urinated onto the bed. Feeling embarrassed and afraid of the consequences, the guest quietly went out of the Prophet's house before dawn. In great hurry, he had left a valuable ring behind. When the Prophet got up he found the bed wet and the ring beside.

Instead of getting upset or scolding him, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) took a piece of cloth, cleaned up the place, and covered the wet spot with sand. He understood that out of embarrassment and fear, he must have left hurriedly.

Later in the day, the Jewish man realized that

he had forgotten his ring in that spot and nervously returned to the Prophet's house due to his fear of what might happen. The Prophet, much to his surprise, welcomed him graciously and returned his ring. He did not mention the incident nor even show him anger or discomfort. He was so moved by the compassion and understanding of the Prophet that he came to realize that the Prophet did not bear a grudge against him over the accident. It had left a big impression on the Jewish man, who witnessed how the Prophet, as a character, was great and how Islam was the true message. He thus became a Muslim, realizing the truth and beauty behind the Prophet's teaching.

That was the act of a prophet, adorable with that man, and instead of getting angry, he cleaned the bed upon which he urinated and became calm and soft with that person, MashAllah. Jan Qurban on our beloved Mohamed.

On the other hand, when he himself went to Tai'if to preach for Islam, the chiefs of Ta'if not only rejected his message but also incited the town's children and servants to throw stones at him, which caused him injury.

But the Prophet neither got angry nor revenged. When angel Jibreel (Gabriel) appeared to him with an offer to crush the city between the mountains, he declined. He turned instead to prayer for the people of Ta'if that their progeny might become Muslims.

The Story of the Woman Who Used to Throw Trash at the Prophet

The Story: There was an elderly lady in Makkah who despised the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) because he spread Islam. Each day, as the Prophet used to pass by her house on his way, she would throw garbage on his way. But still, he would never get up and yell at her for this cruel act; instead, he would go his way peacefully, showing no irritation or anger at heart.

"The strong man is not he who can wrestle well, but the strong man is he who controls himself when he is in a fit of rage.

" Sahih Bukhari

This Hadith presents the concept of being patient and labeling as strong only those people who are compared with others. No doubt, a weak man expresses his wrath to others, but a strong man is always humble and lenient toward others and has a tight grip on his anger.

He who controls his anger and has the habit of forgiveness, eventually his personality develops and he becomes a good citizen of society. I have experienced in my life, people who are forgiving and calm are more successful than those who are aggressive and unforgiving.

Story of Bibi Ayesha and prophet Mohammed

The story of how the Prophet Muhammad responded to the accusation against his wife, 'A'isha,, holds within it a great lesson in forbearance. So in the year 6 AH, during the expedition of Banu Mustaliq, one incident tested the Prophet's patience and integrity. A false accusation of adultery was cast upon Aisha.

Thereafter, the vice accusation caused quite a lot of disturbance among the Muslims and cast a shadow of doubt and distress upon the house of the Prophet. Despite the enormous seriousness of the accusations, Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him revealed an extraordinary level of composure and self-control. He did not react to the allegation by flying into a rage or hastiness, but with tranquility, he would seek the truth. The prophet had not shown his anger to his wife and inquired about this incident; even he was kind to his wife.

After weeks of distress and suspense, Allah finally spoke through a cluster of verses (Surah An-Nur 24:11-20) exonerating Aisha's case (may Allah be pleased with her) and showered abusive invectives on the liars and kept exhorting society not to utter unfounded allegations. This was a categorical and unambiguous exoneration for her and a lesson of justice and honesty for all.

Just imagine, if in this modern age a person were to hear some allegations of adultery against his life partner, what his reaction would be and how he would behave with his partner. At this point, one realizes how important patience (sabr) is in Islam. Our beautiful Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated this by showing calmness in such cases.

Abu Lahab's wife threw filth and dirt on prophet Mohammed

Reflect upon the moment when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) maintained patience when a severe instance of personal abuse occurred. As

the Prophet was praying at the Kaaba, the nasty opponent of his, Abu Lahab's wife, threw filth and dirt on him. Her action was inflicted with the purpose of disgracing and angering the Prophet (PBUH) in front of everyone. Although the motive was clear—to insult him—the Prophet (PBUH) took no heed and continued his prayers calmly.

In such an instance, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) showed a lot of patience and grace. He did not retaliate nor reacted to the insult with anger. Rather, he continued his devotion and increased his concentration toward the Prayer—showing resilience and commitment to the purpose. His patience during such hostile behavior of the people was highly exemplary to his character and his faith in Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) knew that his responsibility required him to bear difficulty and to remain at peace, despite what odds he was facing. Jan qurban on our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for how he expresses so much mercy in that time of adversity.

Today, the practice of sabr and forgiveness seems like a distant norm. Increased cases of domestic violence, killings, disobedience, and other crimes only show the lack of patience and compassion in society. It has been years, and many of the family members are not talking to one another because of the nature of not forgiving. Relationships are being ruined because of the unwillingness to forgive, yet our Holy Prophet, PBUH, showed a forgiving,

merciful, and compassionate way of life. May Allah guide us to be amongst those who are gentle and soft towards others. And we must inculcate the habit of forgiving all people before we go to bed every night. Allah has, very quite often in the Holy Quran, repeated the word sabr and forgiveness, signifying that Allah's mercy is upon those showing mercy to his creatures. May Allah make it an opportunity for us to serve humanity and show the way our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had shown.

Chapter Thirteen

Islamic Mercy: Caring for Animals

"Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good. " Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2592.

Kindness and merciful behavior towards fellow human beings are very distant dreams in today's modern world. Societies often stay far behind in showing such compassion, especially towards the animal kingdom. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Allah's attributes as the Merciful Rabb and His decree require that acts of kindness and compassion should be shown to all His creatures.

The rights of animals are being grossly violated all over the world today. This is, out of human atrocities, like cutting of body parts, live burning, and many other such inhumane practices. Islam is a religion of great mercy, so it strongly disapproves of such actions. The Holy Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him always stressed the kind treatment of animals. Animals are helpless and cannot express their pains and sufferings, hence they need to be preferred and cared for first.

This sentiment is embodied in a well-known Hadith:

One day, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was crossing a garden when he came across a distressed camel. It was weeping, and

when the Prophet drew near, it grew calm. Very much concerned, the Prophet inquired as to who the owner was. A young man came forward, and the Prophet mildly reproached him for making the camel walk too much without giving it enough to eat. He told the young man to be charitable and merciful to the animal.

According to him, animals are also the creatures of Allah and need to be treated with care; mercy is to be shown to them. The Prophet said,

"Fear Allah in these animals who cannot speak for themselves. If you ride them, treat them suitably, and if you eat them, eat them suitably."

Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadith 2548.

The following Hadith beautifully demonstrates the importance of gentle treatment towards animals. The distress of the she-camel and the Prophet's response clearly show that animals not only feel pain but also tell their sorrows to Allah, as this she-camel did to the Prophet Muhammad.

A woman and a thirsty Dog

Another important Hadith is about a man who gave water to a thirsty dog. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"While a man was walking, he felt thirsty. He passed a well, descended, quenched his thirst, and came out. He then saw a dog panting and licking mud due to excessive thirst. The man thought to himself, 'This dog

is suffering from thirst as I did.' So he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, and watered the dog. "Allah accepted his deed and pardoned him."

He was asked about the reward of serving animals. He said: "Yes, there is a reward for serving any living being.

The following Hadith shows the emphasis put on being kind to animals in Islam. By showing his kindness to the creation of Allah, Allah accepted and forgave him. How merciful our Rabb Allah is. His doors of mercy were opened when kindness to His creatures reached them. What a reminder it is for us to seek Allah's reward by imitating mercy and kindness to animals.

The Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him said,

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of God, he is kind to himself." Narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad.

The Prophet used to emphasize gentleness and said,

"Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of all good. " Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2592.

This hadith reflects how harsh hearts, devoid of mercy and gentleness, are filled with egoism and superiority. The deep message here is that once gentleness has been deprived, all good is absent.

Hadith Regarding the Treatment of Cats:

The kindness of the Prophet to animals is aptly

described by a narration regarding a woman who was punished for ill-treating a cat: **"A woman was punished in Hell because of a cat which she had confined until it died.". She neither gave it any food or drink when it was locked up nor did she set it free so that the insects of the earth could eat from it."** Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3318; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2242

The following narration is an excellent example from Sahih Bukhari, which shows how much Islam emphasizes showing mercy and compassion toward animals. The acts of such cruelty are very common today where many Muslims and non- Muslims alike fail to look after cats properly.

The Story of the Bird and Its Nestlings:

One day, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions came across a bird's nest from which they took its young. Noticing the pain and distress on its mother's face, he ordered: "Who has pained this creature on account of taking away its young? Return its chicks to it." Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadith 2675.

The compassion of the prophet towards the mother bird is a sign that even the slightest act of benevolence to animals is important. May Allah guide us towards kindness to every living being.

The Story of the Weeping Tree:

There is a story narrated about a tree stump that the Prophet used to lean on while delivering sermons. One day, a pulpit was built, and the Prophet stopped using the tree. As a result, it began to make a sound like crying. The Prophet comforted the tree by placing his hand on it:

"The trunk wept like a child being comforted until it stopped." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3585)

This story portrays the sensitive mind of the Prophet towards nature. Indeed, with an estimated 15 billion trees lost annually today, nothing is as relevant as the Islamic tradition regarding tree and green preservation. Wantonly cutting down trees without a justifiable reason is considered a sin in Islam.

Hadith on Planting Trees:

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

"There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds but that what is eaten from them by birds, or any living creature, will be considered as Sadaqah for him."

Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 2320.

Prohibition Upon Wasteful Destruction:

During war, the Prophet disallowed all sorts of wasteful destruction:

"Do not kill any child, any woman, or any elder or sick person. Do not practice treachery or mutilation. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. **Do not slaughter a sheep or a cow or a camel, except for food. Do not burn bees and do not scatter them.**" (Muwatta Malik, Book 21, Hadith 10)

Wantonly destroying trees has no basis in Islam;

it violates the principle of protection for Allah's creation. In Islam, humans are taught to be vicegerents or stewards—khalifah—appointed by Allah to take care of the Earth. There is clear blasphemy in an unjustified act of cutting down trees.

Prophet Sulayman and the Ants:

Prophet Sulayman was granted the ability to understand and communicate with animals. One day, as his army marched, they came near a valley of ants. An ant, noticing the approaching army, warned the other ants to enter their dwellings to avoid being crushed:

"One of the ants said, 'O ants, enter your dwellings, that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not.'"

(Quran, Surah An-Naml 27:18)

Upon hearing this, Prophet Solomon smiled and

immediately ordered his army to stop to avoid harming the ants. He acknowledged the ant's warning and thanked Allah for granting him the ability to understand the language of the animals, showing his gentle nature and concern for even the smallest of creatures.

Prophet Noah and the Ark:

The story of the prophet Noah and the Ark manifests compassion toward the animal. Allah ordered Noah to gather pairs of all animal species in order to save them from the flood:

"And when you have embarked on the ship, you and those with you, then say, 'Praise be to Allah who has saved us from the wrongdoing people.'"

Quran, Surah Al-Mu'minun 23:28.

Allah instructed Prophet Noah to save the animals from the flood, which signifies Allah's deep love and care for His creations. This act highlights how much Allah values and protects all living beings.

The Story of Prophet Dawud and the Bird:

Prophet Dawud (David) was known for his just rulings and his empathy towards all living beings. There is a story where a bird complained to Prophet Dawud about another bird that had stolen its nest. Prophet Dawud called for the other bird and asked why it had taken the nest. The bird replied that it was homeless and had no place to stay. Upon hearing this, Prophet

Dawud ordered the bird to return the nest and advised it to build its own, showing justice and compassion in resolving the matter between the two birds.

Prophet Dawud did justice and showed empathy while settling a dispute between two birds over one bird's nest. His judgment to return the nest to its rightful owner and advice to the other bird identify with his sense of justice.

Prophet Ayyub and His Flock:

Prophet Ayyub was known for his patience and kindness. During his times of hardship, even when he was suffering from illness and his wealth was gone, he made sure that his flock of sheep was well cared for. Despite his own pain, he would tend to the animals, ensuring they were fed and safe. This story highlights Prophet Ayub's gentleness and dedication to the well-being of his animals, reflecting his unwavering commitment to kindness.

Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab and the Donkey:

During his caliphate, Umar ibn al-Khattab was known for his just and kind nature. Once, he saw a man overloading his donkey with goods, causing it distress. Umar approached the man and admonished him:

"Fear Allah in your treatment of these animals. Do not burden them beyond their

capacity, and treat them kindly.".

He feels a deep sense of responsibility, such as when Umar ibn al-Khattab said,

"Even if a dog dies hungry on the banks of the Euphrates, then Umar will be responsible for it on the Day of Judgment."

This deep sense of responsibility shows how much animal welfare mattered. This statement reflects Hazrat Umar's profound sense of accountability as a leader. He believed that it was his duty to ensure the welfare of not only the people under his rule but also the animals. His concern was so deep that he felt answerable to Allah even for the suffering of animals, such as a dog, within his jurisdiction.

Only while highlighting all these stories of Prophet Omar, I just realized the role of today's leaders about promoting good governance. Umar was concerned about an animal's death in his reign fearing that he could be answerable before Allah.

Animal suffering and brutality are global issues and deeply concerning. Leaders are not conscious enough to take action. I would like to bring to the forefront of your attention an incident in Pakistan where animals have been mutilated and killed. It is not uncommon for stray dogs and cats in Pakistan to be poisoned, beaten, or mutilated. Such reports are very common in cities with large stray animal populations. A harsh landlord and five of his servants were arrested in Sindh province, Pakistan, for cutting off a camel's leg. It happened after the animal trespassed on his

field in search of fodder. Another distressing incident came to light in which a donkey's ears were reportedly cut off due to a land dispute in Rawalpindi. Thus, societies should propagate the teachings of the Holy Prophet and emphasize Allah's love for people who deal kindly with animals, so that animal safety becomes everybody's priority.

The Prophet Muhammad and the Stray Cat

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a great admirer of cats. One fine afternoon, the great Muezza story unfolded. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was taking his ablutions (wudu) when Muezza, his favorite cat, fell asleep on the sleeve of his robe. When it came the point to leave, he did not want to disturb the sleep of the cat, so he cuts off his sleeve so as not to make the cat wake up in the process of leaving any more. This reveals wretchedness on his part concerning animals and hence a non-interference policy, even with a cat.

The prophet Mohammed was more compassionate and kind toward animals and birds than to anyone else. He cut off the sleeve instead of disturbing the sleeping cat. The rehm for the cat is adorable in the sight of our beloved Prophet Mohammed. Just imagine, in today's world, how most of us are having this tendency to behave in such a kind manner with cats or other animals. We kill them horribly and are not kind toward them as the message sent by our prophet.

The Story of the Prophet Shuayb and the Sheep

Prophet Shu'yab, peace be upon him, given great regard for his truthfulness and justice, was a very gentle character with animals. He would breed a flock of sheep and show much care in their upbringing. He would protect them from overwork and provide them with enough fodder. His generosity toward his flock was talked about, and he is reported to have said:

"Those animals have been entrusted to Allah; we are to treat them with kindness and respect."

It was said by Prophet Shoaib that the animals are entrusted by Allah to us where it is imposed upon us to take good care of them. In such a way, the saying of the holy prophet I remembered where he said,

"Indeed, each one of you is a shepherd and each one of you will be asked about his flock. The leader of a people is a shepherd and will be asked about his flock. A man is a shepherd over his family and will be asked about his flock. A woman is a shepherd in the house of her husband and will be asked about her flock.

And the slave is a shepherd over the property of his master and will be asked about it."

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and a Sharp Knife

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used

to teach his followers how to slaughter an animal humanely. He said,

"When you slaughter, do it in the best manner. Sharpen your knife and relieve the pain of the animal."

Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1955:

Even while sacrificing animals or slaughtering them, the prophet instructed his followers to sharpen the knife in which the pain of the animals be relieved.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and How to Use a Sharp Knife

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught his followers to slaughter animals humanely. He said,

"When you slaughter, do it in the best manner. Sharpen your knife and relieve the pain of the animal."

(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1955).

Story of the Caliph Ali and the Mule

Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib was a wise and tender-hearted person. One day he saw a man overloading his mule. Ali approached him and asked him to reduce the load upon the mule. He said, "These animals have been made subservient to us, but we must not overload them or inflict cruelty upon them, for Allah dislikes those who are unjust".

Today, I see hundreds of people like weightlifters

burdening animals with excessive weights. I am reminded of donkey carts. Many donkeys die and become sick without even bearing the load. May Allah guide us towards their good treatment because Allah does not like those who are cruel. "And they carry your loads to a land you could not have reached except with difficulty to yourselves. Indeed, your Lord is Kind and Merciful." (Quran, Surah An-Nahl 16:7)

The Story of Prophet Yahya and the Deer

Prophet Yahya was an ascetic in particular, having a special affinity for nature. There are several stories related to Prophet Yahya, an ascetic who had a particular affinity for nature, as an example of his life wandering in the wilderness. He is usually seen with deer and other wild animals that he fed and cared for. He treated wildlife as his family, and his tender loving care for wildlife was well known. This goes on to show the deep feeling of compassion he had towards the creation of Allah.

The Story of Abu Huraira and Cats

Abu Huraira was one of the closer companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and he loved cats so much that he got the nickname "Abu Huraira," which literally means "Father of the Kitten." He would always keep a kitten by his side, a sign of his tender and loving nature. His love for cats and the way he treated them were certainly based on how the Prophet, who

treated every creation gently and mercifully, did things.

Quranic Teachings on Animals

The Almighty Allah commands in the Holy Quran to take care of the animals. I would like to bring into the light of some of the important verses from the Quran and to emphasize the concern shown by the Almighty towards being kind to animals and all living beings.

Animals As Part of Creation and Communities:
Allah emphasizes that animals are part of His creation and a living community just as humans are. This next verse shows the recognition of the significance of animals and their communities:

"There is no creature on earth or bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered."

(Quran, Surah Al-An'am 6:38)

Allah says in the Holy Quran that animals are part of His creation and their communities just are like those of humans. Cruelty is not to be shown to them except that which is instructed in this ayah. The verse reflects upon the believers that the animals have communities of their own and a life to live, which is to be respected and put into consideration.

Creation of Animals for a Purpose:

Allah mentions that animals have been created for various purposes, including benefiting humans. It means that animals can be used for their needs, but it does not mean they are to be ill-treated or tortured.

"And the cattle, He created them for you; in them is warmth [from their skins] and [numerous] benefits, and from them, you eat."

(Quran, Surah An-Nahl 16:5)

These verses uncover the blessings of animals and, therefore, the significance in appreciating and respecting their roles in human life.

Respect for Animals:

Respect to the animals is mostly established through the repeating respect due to animals for their position as signs of Allah's creative power. This is a reminder of Allah's generosity, 'for they say 'Indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies - between excretion and blood - pure milk, palatable to drinkers.'

(Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl 16:66)

'And He created the horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and as adornment. And He creates that which you do not know.'

(Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl 16:8)

Prohibition of Overloading Animals:

The Quran shows that no one should overload

animals, and they should use them gracefully. This principle is also found in the broader teachings of Islam with regards to justice and mercy:

"And He created cattle for you; you have in them warm clothing and many benefits, and from them, you eat. And there is beauty in them for you when you bring them home in the evening and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning. And they carry your loads to a land you could not have reached except with great trouble to yourselves. Indeed, your Lord is Kind and Merciful." (Quran, Surah An-Nahl 16:5-7)

The passage emphasizes an understanding of the limitations of animals and how they need to be treated as beings also.

Respecting All Living Beings:

It teaches respect towards every living being as part and parcel of Allah's creation. The mention of even the minutest creatures surely shows how important each living being is by itself:

"Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord."
(Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:26)

The Role of Animals, Avoiding Harm to Creatures:

Therefore it becomes the doctrine of the Holy Quran to the believers to shun inflicting unwarranted harm to any living creature. Of course there is direct reference often towards

humans, but the broader implication of the verse is towards all of creation:

"And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have made his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]." Quran, Surah Al-Isra 17:33

Allah is full of mercy over all of His creation, calling his followers to have mercy with all matters, including the animals:

"And My Mercy encompasses all things." (Quran, Surah Al-A'raf 7:156)

Altogether, these verses imply the virtues of compassion, mercy, and responsible stewardship toward every creation of Allah and underline the insistence that animals are to be treated with respect and kindness. Moral teachings that pertain to a proper way in which Muslims should interact with the natural world, recognizing animals' rights and the responsibilities of man, as a compassionate caretaker, are therefore provided in the Quran.

May Allah show us the righteous path and make us among His favorite Mumineen. Allah Ta'ala is pleased when he sees His creatures being merciful to one another. Our merciful Rabb is pleased with the actions of His slave when he is being compassionate and kind toward his other creatures. The life of the Holy Prophet is full of stories where he took care of animals and birds.

For the sake of this merciful action toward the animal, Allah forgave many people. May Allah grant us Hidaya so that we all should be soft and mild toward the other creations of Allah, so a righteous and just society may come into existence. Allah wants, out of His mercy and compassion, that He may see His attributes in the lives of the believers. His mercy is to manifest from their deeds so that it may guide them toward the path of acting with gentleness, understanding, and forgiveness toward others.

Chapter Fourteen

Charitable Deeds and Philanthropy

**“Sadaqah extinguishes sin as water
extinguishes fire.”**

Tirmidhi

There are various kinds of Jihad, all of which are of important significance in Islam, such as **Jihad al-Nafs, Jihad al-Qalam, Jihad al-Mal, and Jihad al-Sayf**. **Jihad al-Nafs** means striving against one's self. **Jihad al-Mal** is the struggle that has to do with one's riches. **Jihad al-Qalam** is intended as the struggle of pen, and **Jihad al-Sayf** is the jihad of the sword. The present chapter is an attempt to relate **Jihad al-Mal** in the contemporary world and its relationship with Rehm. The contemporary world has been afflicted with some worst humanitarian crises: famine, water insecurity, health crises, spiraling poverty, and climate-related disasters.

Against this backdrop, philanthropic activities and acts of charity are an important means to attain the pleasure of Allah. Many have been rendered in dire need of monetary help for mere survival. It is evident that millions die every year due to food insecurity, poverty, and hunger. Thus, the **Jihad al-Mal** continues to be very important for saving humanity and the winning of blessings from our beloved Allah. By being merciful through our actions, we can become one of the beloved believers in Allah. This chapter will reflect the stories of those Sahaba

who spent their lives in serving Islam and sacrificed their entire wealth for the cause.

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA)

Abu Bakr was the most generous man, being the closest companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the first caliph of Islam. The most prominent act of sacrifice he showed was at the base of the Battle of Taba. The time Prophet (PBUH) asked for contributions for the provisions of the army, Abu Bakr approached the Prophet (PBUH) bringing his all wealth. When the prophet asked him what he had prepared for his family, Abu Bakr answered that he had prepared Allah and His Messenger. This act of giving away everything one has served as a decisive proof of his faith and devotion to Islam.

Uthman ibn Affan (RA)

Allah through his Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) promised Uthman the paradise three great times regarding sacrificing his wealth for the sake of Islam:

The Purchase of the Well of Rumah

Being a period of drought and dearth of water at Medina, a well became an essential commodity in the town. A certain Jew owned a well called Bi'ru Rumah, from which he sold water at exorbitant rates, and Uthman ibn Affan bought it from him for 20,000 dirhams and gave it free to the people of Medina for quenching their thirst. This was an act of remarkable kindness that Uthman bought the well, endowed it, and

made it available to all Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was very much pleased with his act and gave him the great tidings of paradise because of his wonderful deed of selfless giving, which is highly regarded by Allah.

Contribution toward Enlarging the Prophet's Mosque

As time passed, the number of people in the Medina Muslim community grew, and the space within the Prophet's Mosque fell short for the congregation of worshippers. It was then mentioned to the Prophet Muhammad that the mosque was small and needed to be expanded. Uthman responded to his appeal by buying an adjacent land and donating it to the mosque in its expansion. The mosque now could be expanded with adequate space provided for the worshipers to improve their spiritual life. This noble act of charity was appreciated by the Prophet. Again he assured Uthman, of his place in heaven due to his benevolence and support to the cause of Muslims.

Provisions of the army of Tabuk

Among the most leading examples of Uthman's (RA) charity was performed at the time of arrangement of Tabuk's battle. The Muslim army was in dire need of provisions, and Prophet ﷺ requested the companions to make a donation.

Uthman donated 950 camels, 50 horses, and 1000 dinars in gold to prepare the army. That large donation just met most of the demands of the army. From the remainder of this donation,

the Muslims were highly equipped for the campaign. Overwhelmed by Uthman's staggering generosity toward Allah's work, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is quoted as saying, "Nothing Uthman does after today will harm him"—meaning that Uthman's acts of charity and support had clearly won him, through Allah's pleasure, a confirmed seat in Paradise.

The reward of paradise in return for acts of generosity is the prime lesson learned by the Ummah. Heaven can be achieved through our wealth and the pleasure of Allah. The mercy of Allah will be upon those who show mercy to the creation of Allah. Three times Hazrat Usman showed compassion and mercy to others and pleased Allah. Kindness and mercy towards others are loved by Allah to His servants.

Abdul Rahman ibn Awf RA

One of the wealthiest and most honored companions of the Prophet Muhammad was Abdul Rahman ibn Awf RA. Even being the wealthiest, he remained humble and very generous. During one such time, when the Prophet called up for contributions to support the Muslim community and the expeditions of the military, it was when Abdul Rahman responded with such generous nature. At the time of the Battle of Taubah, he donated 200 ounces of gold, a lot of his wealth.

He, further, financed several charitable projects, supported orphans and widows, and set free numerous slaves. How Abdul Rahman ibn Awf was sacrificed for the sake of Allah's cause showed his faith and dedication.

Talha ibn Ubaydullah (RA)

He was one of the ten companions promised paradise. Talha ibn Ubaydullah, RA, became legendary for his bravery and generosity. He used to run successful businesses and donate his earnings to the cause of Allah by distributing the money among the poor and needy. One day, Talha sold a piece of land for 700,000 dirhams. He could not sleep at night until he gave away all that money among the poor, needy, and relatives. His wife asked him why he didn't leave some for his family. He said that he could not think of taking what Allah had provided when some people were in need. He was actuated by the desire of pleasing Allah, by making life easy for these people in distress, while following the example of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu `alayhi wa sallam.

Zubair ibn Al-Awam, RA

Story of Sacrifice Zubair ibn Al-Awam was the next among the ten companions being given the glad tidings of paradise. Zubair was courageous and had a quality of being openhanded. Zubair was a highly successful merchant and had become quite wealthy. He was using his wealth for the betterment of the cause of Islam by investing in several economic opportunities that resulted in profits which were used for charitable works. Zubair freed many slaves with his wealth, supported the needy, and did a great deal for the welfare of the Muslim community. His sacrifices did not stop at wealth; he was a brave warrior, too, who participated in many wars, campaigns, and battles with the Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH).

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (RA)

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas was one of the early converts into the fold of Islam, one of the ten guaranteed paradise, a great warrior, and a loyal servant to the cause of Islam. He is said to be a very humble person, and it is also said about him that he spent his money in the cause of slogans in support of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and spending in general on Muslims. He gave much in the military campaigns, covering many Muslim army expenses. He also looked after the poor and the destitute, making sure his wealth was a source of comfort and upliftment for the people. His life was one unbroken series of sacrifice on behalf of Islam as a warrior, an administrator, and a philanthropist at the same time.

Abu Talha Al-Ansari (RA)

Abu Talha Al-Ansari (RA) was one of the great companions among the Ansar, or helpers of Medina. He had an orchard called "Bayruha," highly fertile, which he irrigated. So, when he learned of the verse urging the believers to spend of what they loved, Abu Talha went to the Prophet (PBUH) and offered him his orchard. He said, "O Messenger of Allah! Verily, Allah says, 'You will never attain righteousness until you spend from what you love,' and the most beloved of my property is this orchard. Verily, I want to give it in charity for the sake of Allah." The Prophet (PBUH) appreciated Abu Talha's

sincerity and asked him to distribute the orchard among his relatives. Then he followed the Prophet's (PBUH) instruction, which was an example to follow in generosity and unselfishness.

Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib

Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab RA and Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib RA were among the most respected companions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. They were much admired for their wisdom, bravery, and qualities that made them great leaders but not to forget the wonderful generosity of these two noble persons. The following stories will show the selflessness and charitable nature of these persons.

Some stories of Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab RA

The Night Patrols and Aid to the Needy:

Hazrat Umar (RA) was in the habit of patrolling the streets of Madina during the night, often in disguise, to personally see to the welfare of his people. On such an occasion he overheard a woman trying to pacify her crying children by boiling an empty pot of water. When Umar asked her about her condition, she said she had nothing with which to feed her children and that the boiling pot was only to give her children hope until they fell asleep. Deeply moved by her plight, Umar immediately went to the state treasury, filled a sack with food, and personally carried it back to the woman's house. When his servant said he would carry the sack for him, Umar refused, saying, "Will you carry my burden

on the Day of Judgment?" Such acts of kindness were just a few of the numerous acts representing his deep concern for the poor and needy.

The Milk Incident:

Another incident relates that while passing through the streets of Madinah, Hazrat Umar heard a mother advising her daughter to put less milk in the milk pot so as to sell it at the same price to the customers. The mother then commented saying that they should mix water with the milk to get more money, but the daughter declined on the grounds that Umar had prohibited all these.". The mother complained, "Umar was not there to see them," and the daughter replied, "Even if Umar does not see us, Allah does." Taken aback by the honesty and fear of Allah in the daughter, Umar, upon hearing the story, had her married to his son, Asim. In this manner, not only justice and truthfulness but also piety and integrity were portrayed in his character.

Distribution of Wealth and Food

Umar was austere in his personal life and a man of the strongest feelings of justice. During his caliphate, the state's wealth used to be distributed with the absolute impartial charge. He himself used to lead the distribution of bread and other provisions. There was no one who slept with an empty stomach. He lived a modest life and never accumulated any personal fortune, and he even ensured that the country's

finances be directed at the benefit of the people. His form of personal scale leadership began from the level of humbling to undertake the service of others, and his service included the spirit of giving as its core.

Some Generous Stories of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib:

Giving in Secret:

Hazrat Ali, RA, was a very modest and magnanimous man and used to give to charity in secret. There is this narration: that he loaded a sack with food on his back and used to go out at nights, distributing it among the poor and needy anonymously, so that his left hand did not know what his right hand gave.

People of Medina realized after his death who had silently and modestly been supporting the poor all this time. His charity was so deep that, apparently, accounts show hundreds of families would go to bed at night with full bellies due to his anonymous generosity.

Charity in the Face of Hardship:

Hazrat Ali (RA) and his wife, Fatimah (RA), led a simple life with many hardships. Despite being poor themselves, they never hesitated to help others. One famous incident is when a poor man knocked at their door and begged for food. Hazrat Ali (RA) and Fatimah (RA) both had enough food for the following days for them and their children, but they still trusted in Almighty Allah to the extent that they could give in the

hands of a poor man all that food. Their selfless act was praised later in Chapter 76: Surah Al-Insan,verses 8-9.

Ransom of the Captives:

Muslims captured many prisoners after the Battle of Badr. Hazrat Ali (RA) showed his tender-heartedness and generosity in striving to arrange ransom for those prisoners, securing their release. He also pleaded for their good treatment with mercy and benevolence. He was definitely showing his huge sense of justice here as this deep concern he displayed and humane treatment of prisoners in it showed his high compassion and adherence to Islamic principles of mercy and pardon.

**It is undisputed that all of these Sahaba—
Hazrat Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Hazrat Uthman ibn Affan, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hazrat Talha ibn Ubaydullah, Hazrat Zubair ibn Al-Awam, Hazrat Abdul Rahman ibn Awf, and Hazrat Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas—are the Ashra Mubashra, the ten companions of the Prophet Muhammad who were given the tidings of Paradise during their respective life-times.**

They got the good news of Jannah from Allah. These Sahabas were extraordinary due to their rare generosity, and they spent their wealth for the betterment and success of the Ummah and Islam.

On the contrary, the genus of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was marked with frequent reminders about showing generosity and mercy to others. Part of the hadiths instruct:

" The best of people are those who are most beneficial to people."

Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

"The charity you spend is for your own good. The more so, the more you will get. Hence, giveth thy charity without fear because, in certain cases, it is fear which becomes a cause for poverty."

Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir by Al-Tabarani

"When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: continuous charity, knowledge that is beneficial, or a righteous child who prays for him."

Sahih Muslim

"The best of charity is when you give while you are in need and struggling and you are eager to keep your wealth, but you still give away."

Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

"Whoever helps his brother in need, Allah will help him in his own time of need."

Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

"Whoever provides food for a fasting person to break his fast will have a reward like that of the fasting person without diminishing the reward of the fasting person in the slightest."

Tirmidhi

"Spend in charity and do not count, for Allah will count for you. Do not fear poverty, for Allah is the Provider."

Sahih Muslim

"Sadaqah extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire."

Tirmidhi

"The one who helps the poor is like a person who is fasting all the time and prays at night."

Ibn Majah

Some verses from the Quran related to generosity and spending of money in Allah's way, Jihad al-Maal:

"Whoever spends his wealth in Allah's cause is like a grain of corn that grows seven ears; under every ear there are hundred grains. Allah increases manifold to whom He likes."

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:261)

"O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth, and do not aim at the defective from it to spend [from it] while you yourselves would not take it [except with closed eyes]. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy."

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse: 267

"Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase and invoke [Allah's] blessing upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

Surah At-Tawbah (9:103)

"Those who spend their wealth in the night and the day, secretly and publicly, will have their reward with their Lord. No fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve."

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:274)

"The example of those who spend their wealth seeking Allah's pleasure and to strengthen their own souls, is like a garden on a hilltop: heavy rain falls upon it, and it brings forth its fruit twofold."

Surah Al-Baqarah (2:265)

"And what you spend in the way of Allah

shall be repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."

Surah Al-Anfal (8:60)

"And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah — give them tidings of a painful punishment."

Surah At-Tawbah, 9:34

It basically dwells on the emphasizing of charity, benefits of spending one's wealth in Allah's way, and rewards for generosity. The aforementioned verses guide on how to participate in Jihad al-Maal by encouraging the spending of resources over others out of mercy and seeking Allah's pleasure.

We, therefore see through the lives of all the prophets, and find that they were continuously indulgent in acts of generosity and mercy towards others. The best case amongst these remains to be that of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who spent his entire life in the service of and showing benevolence of the highest kind to others. I am trying to bring into focus the exemplary generosity so suffice to say especially the selflessness and compassion of our holy prophets.

History has it that there are several famous stories regarding the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself, his acts of charity and generosity towards the poor, and orphans:

Sacrifice of His Wealth in the Battle of Tabuk

During the most pitiful condition of the Muslims in the Battle of Tabuk, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked his Companions to donate freely for the army. He himself sacrificed a lot. He gave away a great deal of his own money to the cause, although he was by no means affluent. He asked his wife Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) to give from their own contribution. The example of the Prophet influenced many of his companions to contribute large amounts as well, manifesting his level of commitment towards the betterment of society.

How the Orphan Girl Went Without Her Daily Meal

And there is a case of a little girl who was an orphan and came to the Prophet. The little girl came to the Prophet to help her. He, of course, did not have much, but the Prophet still acted immediately. He helped her in every way he could and comforted her. His goodness did not stop at all oral promises; he attended to the orphan girl by giving her physical care and support, showing his great compassion to orphans and all the needy.

The Tale of the Blanket

Once, the Prophet Muhammad had this very plain blanket. One night, a beggar came and implored him for it. Despite his not-so-fortunate economic status, he gave that blanket to that man, thus leaving himself without any shield to cover himself. This act of giving makes himself

strongly committed to people and their sufferings, even at personal cost.

The Case of the Widow and Her Children

There was a widow with children who was in a very bad financial position. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) came to know about it and took upon himself the responsibility of providing for her. He arranged for her to have a stipend and extended other help from the state treasury, testifying his care for the well-being of people who were poor or else relatively weak in society.

His Generosity with the Guests

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was very hospitable and generous to his guests. On numerous occasions, he would even sacrifice his own food and comfort to make sure that his guests were properly cared for. One example is when some guests visited his house; although the Prophet himself was quite poor, he made sure they were fed and looked after, even if it meant he had to go without.

The Bedouin and the Well

A Bedouin came one time to see the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who was taking a nap. He asked for water, and the Prophet, even though he barely had any for himself, instructed his followers to bring some for the guest.

Story of the Arab Traveler

An Arab traveler came to the Prophet Muhammad and appealed for assistance from him. Prophet was at that time without money and asked his companions to search out some money for the traveler. On not finding anything to be given to him, the Prophet Himself gave away his own garments to match the poor Arab traveler requirements. The selfless deed on his part showed the length to which he would go and help people, even if it meant parting with his possessions, personal things at stake .

The Story of Prophet's Generosity to His Companions

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was very generous regarding his companions. This was the scenario with the Battle of Uhud: even in the distribution of the spoils of war, Prophet Muhammad distributed it among his followers in such a manner that even the poor among them had their share. Well, he usually distributed resources with so much care that no one was left aside, with deep concern extended for the welfare of all his followers.

The Story of the Poor Woman and Her Dates

The Prophet's concern for the poor is excellently exemplified by this story. One day, a poor woman came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asking for food. There was nothing available with the Prophet at that time to give to that

woman, so he offered the dates he was carrying

in his own provisions, showing that even the slightest act of charity was worth something. It is his readiness to share even the least that characterizes great generosity.

The story of the well of Aris

The story of the well of Aris is one where Prophet Muhammad went ahead and bought the well, which was so close to Medina, acting upon it to secure it for public use. So he allowed access to all people, poor and needy, to this natural resource. In so doing, he was able to reach out to all people in the community, no matter what their social standing was.

The Tale of the Man who had a New Garment

Once a man wearing new clothes came to the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet asked him if he had bought the new clothes for some occasion; the man said yes. Immediately the Prophet told the man to donate these clothes among the people in need, stating that real virtues of money and goods are in sharing and helping others.

The Story of the Three Men Who Came to the Prophet

Three men came to Prophet Muhammad seeking bread. He didn't have anything to eat for that moment and therefore resorted to his family and followers for help. They managed to gather some food. The prophet served them himself and

ensured he dishes out to each of the men. The story just shows how immediately he responded to the needs of those who came to him, which was his dedication toward hospitality and care for others.

The Story of the Lost Camel

One day, a Bedouin came to the Prophet Muhammad because his camel had gone missing. The Prophet went after the lost camel, found it, and took care to return the camel to the Bedouin and get help so that the needs of the man in that place were satisfied. The story thus underlines how the Prophet himself would get involved in solving the problems of those in trouble.

The Story of the Man Who Borrowed Money

A man borrowed some money once from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and then did return it after some time, with promise to pay back even later. Once the time of repayment came, the man was left with no money to give back. Not only did the Prophet (peace be upon him) remit him off from his loan, but he even confronted, comforted the man, and expressed some understanding and compassion for the man. That story is indicative of his greater attitude toward mercy and benevolence in all kinds of the loan transaction.

The Story of the Prophet's Sacrifice

Many times, the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, would himself ensure that his followers were given more importance over his own needs. For instance, at times when food was scarce, he would often fast so that first his companions and the poor could be catered for. In such acts of self-sacrifice, he has set an example of how one must remain undeterred by all odds when doing for the goodwill of all human beings.

"And We have sent you not but as a mercy to the worlds." Surah Al-Anbiya (21:107)

Indeed, one has to ponder over the fact that Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, was selected and sent to this world as mercy. His acts of generosity and sacrifice being for the betterment of others were such that they reflect and focus on generosity, charity, and philanthropic deeds as the main origins of Islam. Going through the merciful attributes of prophets and Sahabas, and Quranic verses and hadiths concerning Jihad al-Mal, an attempt has been made to direct attention towards the miserable situation of humanity today. It is our duty to make sacrifices for ourselves and help our brothers in need, as ordered and desired by our Merciful Lord.

Prophet Ibrahim's Hospitality to Guests;

Prophet Ibrahim is well-known for his generosity and hospitality. He always entertained guests and made them share his lunch and dinner. His

hospitality was limitless, but it was not only among the members of his family and his friends; he also invited strangers or any guests who passed by him. The best-known story of Ibrahim's hospitality is the visit of three guests to him, who were three angels coming to visit Ibrahim in the guise of traveling humans. And came to Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) house; he, for the first, considered them guests and did not show any dissatisfaction. He cordially invited them and prepared a good meal. He showed his best hospitality to serve with the finest food. He prepared a roasted calf for all of them. This was his generous and sincere provision and wish to give his food to the guests.

"Have you any information about the honored guests of Ibrahim? When they entered upon him and exclaimed, 'Peace [and he answered], '[We greet you with] peace.' [you are] a people unknown.' Then he went to his household and came with a fat [roasted] calf. And placed it near them. He said, 'Will you not eat?' Then he put his hands aside towards them. They said, 'Fear not.' And they gave him good tidings of a learned boy, [Isaac] having knowledge of the Scripture. And they gave him good tidings of the truth of the story of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). And they gave him good tidings of a learned boy, [Isaac] having knowledge of the Scripture. And when the fear had departed from Ibrahim and the good tidings had reached him, he began to argue with Us concerning the people of Lut. Indeed, Ibrahim was forbearing, ardent, and oft-

turning to Allah."

Surah Adh-Dhariyat 51:24-27

Therefore, even the other prophets were kind towards others and felt humiliation. Like the prophet Yusuf was a ruler of Egypt, but despite that, he ate with the poor and sat with them, showing love for poor people.

Now, let's go through the fact and figures of how many people are suffering because of no monetary help:

The World Bank estimates that around 5.6 million children under the age of five are reported to die every year, with increased ratios of deaths due to malnutrition and poverty-related factors.

Based on the findings of the World Health Organization, each year

approximately 5.3 million people die from conditions that could have been prevented or treated if access to basic health services had been ensured. In the majority of cases, the inability to pay for healthcare often leads to preventable deaths.

As reported by UN Habitat, approximately 1.8 billion people live under the conditions of poor housing, which are susceptible to health-related risks and early death. Insanitary and dangerous living conditions contribute to the transmission of diseases such as cholera and malaria.

According to the World Health Organization, close to 703,000 people globally die by

committing suicide every year. Financial difficulty is clearly a predisposing factor to suicide, although the percentage attributable solely to economic factors is difficult to quantify.

Global Financial Crisis (2007-2008): In another study published in Lancet, it was indicated that in the context of the financial crisis, suicides did increase, with an estimated 5,000 excess suicides in Europe.

The 1990 Japanese Recession: In Japan, research evidence indicates that the economic recession in the 1990s was associated with a significant increase in the suicide rates, with estimates suggesting that there could be around 30,000 additional suicides during this period.

According to WHO, some 2.2 billion people worldwide are deprived of safely managed drinking water services. This leads to the induction of diseases like dysentery and cholera, which figure among leading causes of morbidity and mortality, especially in children.

WFP tells us that about 2.2 million children in Yemen suffer from acute malnutrition, with many under life-threatening conditions due to a lack of food and essential nutrients.

How do we even begin to break sustainably the vicious cycle of poverty that since 2023 means

more than 719 million people?

As in this Jihad al maal, we can serve ourselves for such needy people, and significant financial contributions pull millions out of extreme poverty—the level below which a person cannot even afford the basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing.

Health facilities could be constructed and operated, medical supplies bought, treatment for diseases offered, and hence improve general health and reduce mortality.

UNICEF estimates that 2.2 million children in Yemen alone are acutely malnourished. Donations could fund nutritional programs, food distribution, agricultural support, and hence reduce malnutrition and improve health and growth for millions of children.

According to UNESCO, there is an estimated 258 million of children and youth who are out of school. Donations could support the provision of educational infrastructure projects, scholarships, and education materials to increase access to quality education and offer children better prospects for their future.

Claims World Health Organization, 2.2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water. Donations could finance water infrastructure projects, improve sanitation facilities, and reduce the incidences of water borne diseases. One would need to acquire finance as soon as

possible after these natural calamities or conflicts. Donations could provide emergency aid in the form of food, medical care, and temporary shelters to alleviate the immediate suffering of the affected populations.

Donations could facilitate the building of low-cost housing and support homeless shelters that would offer stable accommodation conditions and stable conditions to people with no secure housing.

If all the affluent contributed their affluence or wealth into the benefit of the poor, then clearly, there would be a tremendous potential for alleviating many of the grievances from amongst poor communities. Health, education, food, water, and economic development, such donations may have caused unimaginable alteration in lives involving millions. Prophet Mohammed demonstrated the path of being generous. If every man who has riches starts donating some wealth among the poor, orphans, and needy of his surrounding in his town or city, we surely can minimize the complaints of the people and make our rab pleased. If thousands of rich segments started shaking their hands for jihad, al maal, and making efforts to elevate the depressed segments of societies, we can come out with constructive outcome. Just imagine in a single country if all the rich people get involved in contributing to their wealth in positive philanthropic activities; in the end, the lives of the poor are bound to take a positive turn. This sort of act is very merciful and kind over the other people, and Allah likes this. In this way, zakat mentioned 32 times and Sadaqah

mentioned 9 times in the holy Quran. The philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi has given his entire life for humanity and erased countless tears in our nation through the Edhi foundation. Similarly, other foundations including, Org. Saylani Welfare International Trust, Chhipa Welfare Association, Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Indus Hospital, SOS Children's Village, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Oxfam International, World Food Programme (WFP), Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and many more are serving mankind in an exemplary manner. May Allah give us Hidaya to perform jihad al Maal and please Allah through our merciful attitude towards others. No doubt, Allah loves those who are merciful towards his creation.

Why I Wrote This Book: A Reflection on Mercy in a World of Misunderstanding

As I sit to pen these final words, my heart is heavy with the state of our world yet lifted by the boundless hope embedded in the truth I've sought to share. This book was born from a place of profound anguish and unwavering love anguish at witnessing how Islam, a faith rooted in *Rahmah* (Divine Mercy), has been distorted into a caricature of harshness; love for the God whose very essence is compassion, and for humanity drowning in needless suffering.

The Catalysts: Oppression, Misinterpretation, and Lost Compassion

1. The Distortion of Divine Justice:

I watched in pain as verses of the Quran revealed to uplift the oppressed were weaponized to justify oppression. The same *Surah Al-Baqarah* that commands, "*Do not transgress limits*" (2:190), was cited to rationalize violence against innocents. I saw the Prophet's legacy of forgiving his Meccan persecutors twisted into narratives of perpetual vengeance. When a mob in Pakistan lynched a man over false blasphemy allegations, I wept. This wasn't Islam; this was a betrayal of everything *Ar-Rahman* represents.

2. The Suffering of the Voiceless:

From camels mutilated over land disputes in Sindh to dogs poisoned on city streets, I

saw creation crying under human cruelty. The Hadith "*A woman entered Hell for starving her cat*" (Sahih Bukhari 3318) echoed in my ears as I read reports of animal torture. How could we, entrusted as *khalifah* (stewards) of Earth, become its tormentors?

3. The Silent Cries of Humanity:

Statistics haunted me: 735 million facing hunger (UN 2023), 2.2 billion without clean water (WHO), and 15,000 children dying *daily* from poverty-linked causes (UNICEF). Yet in Muslim lands hoarding wealth, I saw mosques gilded while orphans begged outside. The Prophet's warning "*He who eats while his neighbor starves is not a believer*" (Al-Bayhaqi) felt like a searing indictment of our complacency.

4. Hijacked Narratives:

"Jihad" was reduced to swords by extremists, erasing its true forms: the *jihad al-mal* (wealth) of Uthman funding wells for the thirsty, the *jihad al-qalam* (pen) of scholars preserving knowledge, and the *jihad al-nafs* (self-reform) that cultivates mercy. Islamophobes painted faith as tyranny, while some "scholars" preached wrath over wisdom, driving youth from Allah's embrace.

Reclaiming the Heart of Islam: Mercy as Revolution

I wrote this book to scream a truth too often whispered:

- **Allah's Core Attribute is Mercy.** His very first words in the Quran are "*Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim*" (In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful). Of His 99 Names, 75% evoke grace, forgiveness, and love. Hell is an exception; Heaven is His promise.
- **The Prophets Were Mercy Incarnate.** From Yusuf forgiving his betrayers to Isa healing lepers, their lives were blueprints of compassion. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) kissed an orphan's forehead, freed slaves, and pardoned murderers not to conquer lands, but hearts.
- **Justice Without Mercy is Injustice.** Surah Al-Hujurat (49:9) commands reconciliation, not retaliation. Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:32) equates saving one life to saving all humanity. We forgot this when we silenced dissent with dogma.

A Call to the Ummah: Become Mercy in Motion

This book is not theology, it is a battle cry:

1. **Reject the Industry of Hatred.** Boycott preachers who sell hellfire over hope. Seek scholars who embody the Prophet's smile, not his sword.
2. **Let Mercy Dictate Action.** Feed a starving child before funding a mosque dome. Shelter a stray before debating hijab. Allah says: "*The most noble among*

you are the most righteous" (Quran 49:13)
not the most rigid.

3. **Amplify the Unheard.** Be the voice for the woman buried in an "honor" killing, the refugee denied water, the donkey beaten under overloaded carts. As the Prophet taught: *"Show mercy to those on earth, and Heaven will show mercy to you"* (Tirmidhi).

A Closing DU'a

O Allah, Lord of the Worlds!
For every life lost to misinterpretation,
For every heart hardened by falsehood,
For every creature crying under our neglect
Guide us back to Your Mercy.

**Make us like Your Prophet:
Who forgave stones with prayers,
Who fed enemies with his last dates,
Whose legacy was love inscribed in eternity.**

**Let this book be a seed watered with tears,
rooted in truth that blossoms into gardens of
compassion. For in the shade of Your Mercy,
we find our salvation.**

آمين يا رب العالمين (Ameen, O Lord of the Worlds.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Uroosa Khan is an emerging literary voice and author of the acclaimed books. As a columnist and researcher, she is recognized for her insightful exploration of faith, spirituality, and human connection. Her debut novel, *The Light of Noor*, delves into the intricate relationship between the creator and creation, drawing inspiration from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). With a unique blend of emotional depth and philosophical inquiry, Uroosa's work is an invitation to reflect on life's greatest questions.

A passionate advocate for emotional resilience and the power of faith, Uroosa's writing is an ongoing meditation on human existence, helping readers navigate life's struggles through the lens of compassion and unwavering belief. Her articles and research work regularly contribute to contemporary discussions on spirituality, offering a fresh perspective on traditional themes. Uroosa's voice continues to inspire readers, encouraging them to explore their own connections with the unseen forces that shape their lives.